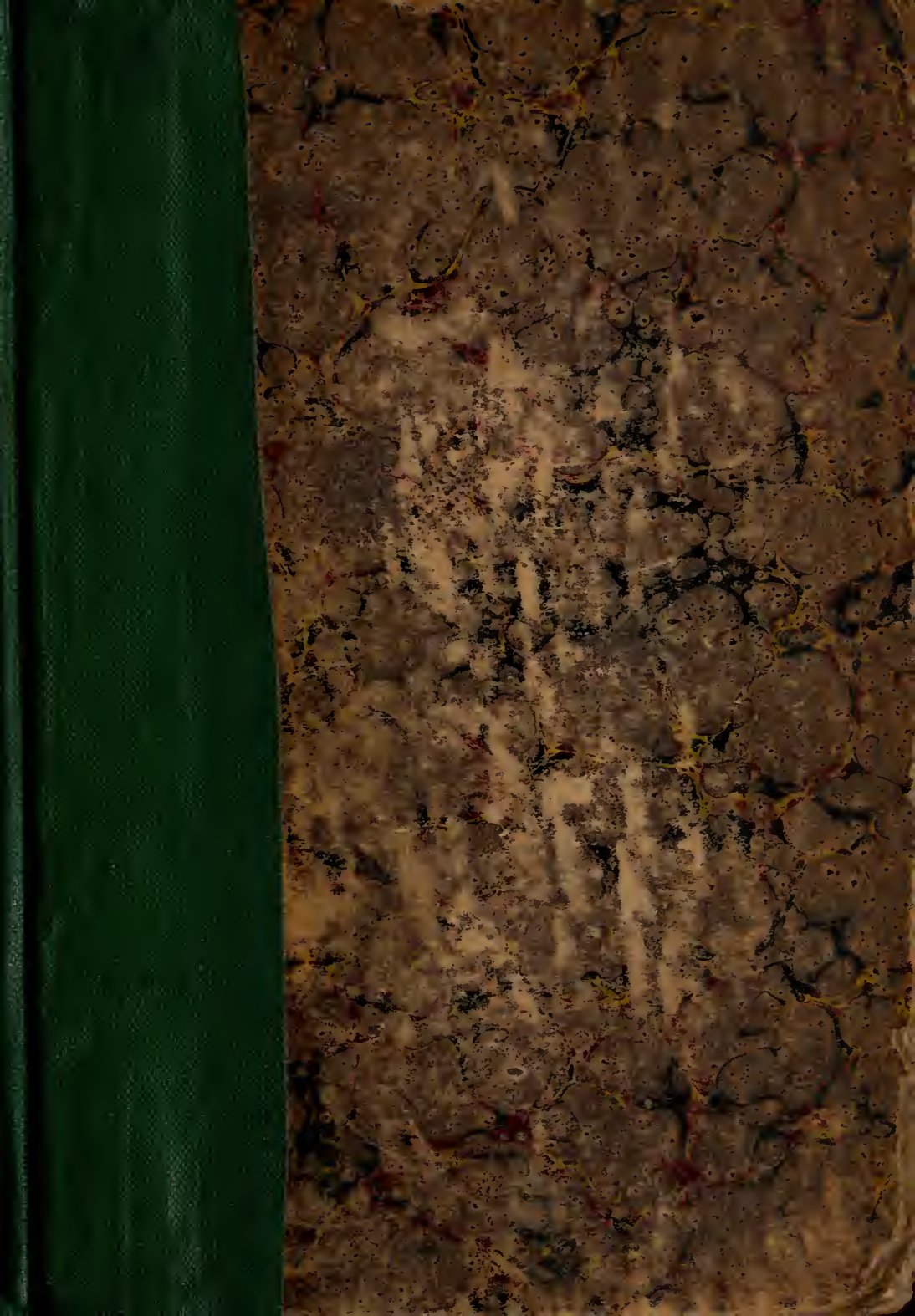




PZ3

No. D416 Lik



Boston Public Library

Do not write in this book or mark it with pen or pencil. Penalties for so doing are imposed by the Revised Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

*This book was issued to the borrower on the date
last stamped below.*

STACK FOUR

[illegible]

P73
D416 Lib

COPYRIGHT, 1881,
BY LEE AND SHEPARD.

All rights reserved.

YRABE LUBA

347 30

NOT 208 70 710

420.106

Oct. 11. 1887

242.3.10

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
TONY	I
CHAPTER II.	
UNCLE JACK	8
CHAPTER III.	
MARY GREEN	14
CHAPTER IV.	
THE RECTOR	21
CHAPTER V.	
TAKING A STAND	28
CHAPTER VI.	
MARY GEEEN	35
CHAPTER VII.	
THE DARKENED LIBRARY	43
CHAPTER VIII.	
OUR BISHOP AT THE "EVENING"	51
CHAPTER IX.	
THE HOUSEKEEPER	61
CHAPTER X.	
TIED UP IN A RUG	71
CHAPTER XI.	
THE PACKAGE UNTIED	77
CHAPTER XII.	
THE NURSERY	84
CHAPTER XIII.	
A TEST QUESTION	87

	PAGE
CHAPTER XIV.	
FLOWER AND THORN	98
CHAPTER XV.	
AT SARATOGA	107
CHAPTER XVI.	
AT THE HOTEL.	118
CHAPTER XVII.	
A DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY	124
CHAPTER XVIII.	
NO CHAMPAGNE	136
CHAPTER XIX.	
OUR EXCURSION	146
CHAPTER XX.	
IN THE LAKE!	153
CHAPTER XXI.	
TALKING WITH FATHER	163
CHAPTER XXII.	
SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED	167
CHAPTER XXIII.	
WILL'S LITTLE STORY	176
CHAPTER XXIV.	
A LITTLE BRANDY	187
CHAPTER XXV.	
THE BISHOP'S LETTER	196
CHAPTER XXVI.	
JACK'S PROMISE	204
CHAPTER XXVII.	
SAVED!	211

LIKE A GENTLEMAN.

CHAPTER I.

TONY.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS: that my name is Antonia; that from my very cradle I have borne the blessed un-Roman diminutive of Tony; that I am a tall, blond feminine, with plenty of will and ambition, whom most people, judging from my cognomen, consider a biped of the male persuasion, until I dawn upon them in all the glory of a well-dressed girl of nineteen summers.

Know, also, that I have an uncle Orlo Standewort, at present the proud incumbent of a gubernatorial office, whom all his friends and all the world exalt; and an uncle Jack Meigs, whom his enemies and the world have been wont to slander; and aunts and cousins to match.

Uncle Orlo, it was said, drank like a gentleman, but uncle Jack like a fish, with this dif-

ference, — that fish drink nothing but water, and uncle Jack any thing else. The assertion might be true, — was true, in fact ; but then, who that knew them intimately didn't like uncle Jack best, with his handsome tanned face, and his wondrously taking speech and ways ?

The temperament of a man has something to answer for in the general summing-up of his follies, to call by no worse a name those thoughtless habits and wayward impulses that too often beset that unfortunate individual — “his own worst enemy.”

Open-hearted and open-handed as the day, uncle Jack made friends almost at a glance, with that rare illuminating smile of his. The dimples in his cheeks were like *avant coureurs*, — they bespoke an interest before the finely-formed lips had moved. The whole man was charming ; and I don't wonder my aunt Flossy loved him dearly enough to marry him in the face of a great many warnings. Not but that it might have been better if she had listened ; but what woman, very deeply in love with a man whom everybody admires, and all his personal friends idolize, ever would ?

I was eighteen when aunt Flossy had been married nearly nine years, and there were five of the most beautiful babies you ever laid your eyes on at Fern Terrace. Yes, all babies ;

because there were two pairs of twins (the two eldest seven, the next two six), and Mabel, — in my eyes the seventh wonder of the world, — a cherubic girl just turned four. In her face was no trace of her earthly lineage. The pure dove-like eyes, large and liquid, and lambent as soft flickering flames, gave the heart a sweet pain as they rested wistfully on your own.

Papa worshipped her. For the ruder boys — all boys the rest were — he did not seem to care, beyond a proud sense of grandfathership; but with Mabel on his knee, he said he felt nearer heaven.

“How did you leave them all?” he asked one day, as I came home with the little Mabel. He was always anxious when she came with me.

“All well except uncle Jack : he was drunk, as usual,” I said.

Papa groaned.

“Tony, I shall dread to see you marry,” he said. “Nobody’s prospects were better than poor Flossy’s ; but” — he shook his head, sighing.

“Don’t worry, papa,” I said lightly. “I’m not one of the Flossy kind, you know.”

He smiled, looking at me fondly.

“No, dear, that is true ; but equally, under certain circumstances, your life would be

wretched, and then it would be so hard to leave you!"

"I don't want you to leave me, you dearest of old darlings," I made haste to say, kissing him on his broad white forehead; the soft curling locks scattered over it were so silken and shining! "Don't you know, when I was a wee mite I said I meant to marry the bishop? Well, you just wait and see: I mean he shall ask me, anyway; and you're not to talk of leaving me." At that papa made that queer little rattle in his throat, which is all his stock in trade when he wants to show me how alarmingly ill he is going to be; and I, who had pulled off the child's pink hat, with its curling feather, and little white sheep-skin coat, also gloves of such diminutive size and fairy-like texture that I was almost afraid to lay them aside for fear they would vanish, tossed the little creature, laughing, in his lap, and did so enjoy the winsome picture, her heavenly face, and the golden hair lying in heavy waves all over his black coat, you would declare it was spun gold.

"If Jack had been a poor man," said papa, his delicate blue-white chin resting on Mabel's softly-veined brow.

"Then, you know, he'd have been in the gutter many a time," said I. "As it is, he almost

always comes genteelly home in a handsome carriage ; and if the neighbors should happen to see him creeping up the steps, or, haply, led by the coachman, why, though they may wink and shrug, they say nothing."

"Poor Flossy !" murmured papa.

"Oh ! Flossy is used to it. She takes things easy, you see. It isn't as if he beat her."

Papa looked up quick, shuddering.

"Beat a woman !" he said in his low, sweet voice.

"Of course they do sometimes, even gentlemanly sots. But, O papa ! it is too bad, too vulgar to speak of, isn't it ? Only, I tell you, papa, I wish Flossy had my spirit. I've advised her, but all in vain. Some time she'll see it would have been better to listen, even to a crazy-brained niece."

"And what would my foolish little Mentor do, supposing she had the reins in her own hands ?" asked papa.

"Do !" A thousand exclamation points would fail to indicate the emphasis with which my monosyllabic answer rang out upon the startled air. "Do ! I'd — poison him."

"Poison Jack, — handsome, unfortunate Jack ? My dear, we should have to blacken our escutcheon with a gallows."

"I don't mean quite to death : he should be

poisoned, whipped, or somethinged, within an inch of his life. But, papa, haven't we had enough of this subject?" and I pointed to the sensitive child, who had turned her face away; and when grandpa lifted it gently with his thumb and finger, great tears were rolling down her cheeks.

The mischief was done. No matter how carefully I tried to condone it, the child turned from me with a sob.

"Why, darling," I said, trying to drive my own tears back, "don't you know I love uncle Jack—dear uncle Jack—almost as much as mamma and Mabel do?"

But the child was hurt, wounded almost unto death. Her little pulses beat fast and heavily, and her veins throbbed: I could see them under the tender skin. Her father was her idol,—always had been. In his intense joy at the birth of his first girl, he had almost promised Flossy, that, for the child's sake, he would give up the great fault that flawed his otherwise perfect character; and the child seemed to him like a miracle of loveliness. She was his only girl: he adored her; and, love begetting love, she adored him.

Not long after that, she lay asleep upon my lap. Oh, wonderful incarnation of flesh and blood in sinless infancy! Such exceeding beauty.

"1
ter ma.

ty seemed not of earth. Only for a long-drawn sobbing sigh now and then, and the rich carnation of the cheek, I should hardly have known she was breathing.

CHAPTER II.

UNCLE JACK.

FERN TERRACE was a very nest of beautiful houses. Vines ran lovingly up from grassy bank to roof, and stretched their graceful length in all sorts of fanciful shapes, now making a bower of a bay-window, now running along under the eaves, then, in irregular but perfect grace, darting hither and thither in dainty festoons and delicate trailing lengths.

The terrace consisted of four houses. At either end a small square, filled with flowering shrubs, charming trees, and fountains always in play, added to the attractiveness of the neighborhood.

The property had been improved and beautified by my great uncle, Harry Irwin, who, through almost unprecedented luck in speculation, had made a fabulous fortune, and changed a barren hundred acres from a wilderness to a town. Gradually the houses had crept to this outlying portion ; and, though considered still in the suburbs, it was in reality the best and hand-

somest part of the city. The country smiled there, notwithstanding, in the great oaks, elms, and chestnuts, that cast their cool shadows over the lawns, and wherever they were allowed to remain. In certain sheltered spots, ferns of every variety had been planted; for my great uncle was passionately fond of this simple frond.

It was a fancy of his to name these houses, when he gave them to his daughters as they married, after three of his favorite mines. His own, now occupied by a stranger, he called "The Irwin." The others were respectively, "The Spur," "The Sheaf," "The Bend."

Flossy, who had married handsome Jack Meigs, who was also wealthy, was the youngest and the prettiest of the Irwin girls, all of them conspicuous for beauty, grace, and the highest social qualities. Dear aunt Flossy! she was in complete harmony with her home. Among her flowers she looked a flower herself: of all the adornments that met the eye everywhere, she was the fairest and brightest. She was a little creature, quick of movement, brilliant as a humming-bird, and brave as a lion. In her society days, rather, I should say, in the days of her belle-ship, no one had been more sought after than Flossy Irwin. The life of every circle, men hung upon her lightest words, and

women envied as well as admired her. She was the last to leave Irwin House; and her father had very reluctantly yielded his consent to her marriage with Jack Meigs, though Jack was one of his favorites, and his father had been his bosom-friend.

"You like Jack, do you not, papa?" she would say. "You are not afraid, dear father, that Jack will disgrace himself?"

"Not a bit of it," was the reply. "I like the young fellow vastly: I like to drink a glass or two with him. Of course, he will always drink like a gentleman. It runs in the blood. I never saw old Dick Meigs upset in my life. I suspect your Puritan always: but then, you see, Flossy, Irwin House won't seem the same to me without you; someway I wanted you to stay till the old man was gone, for something tells me I shall go out like a snuffed candle."

Flossy hung on his neck like a good child, cried a little, protested a great deal, declared that she would live single all her life if he demanded the sacrifice; but, nevertheless, she went down to her handsome lover with the conviction that there was only one man in the world worth living for and with, and that man was Jack Meigs.

So it was not long before she was domiciled

in her own beautiful home, — the loving gift of her doting father, castle-like, on a small scale, in its construction, with an interior adorned like a palace. I wish I could describe it. It would hardly seem, with its rare decorations, many of them imported, like going through the list of an upholsterer, or the catalogue of a modern *bric-à-brac* shop.

Geraldine, my next oldest aunt, occupied house number two, The Bend. She had married the son of a well-known judge, and lived very happily with him and their only son Will, a youth of eighteen. She was a quiet, careful woman, very fond of home, indeed wholly devoted to her domestic duties, and proud and a little afraid of her eldest sister, the manager and ruler of the family *coterie*.

Aunt Catherine had been the first to enter upon possession at Fern Terrace. Her husband was reputed to be a millionaire. He owned two distilleries, several wholesale stores, and lived, or appeared to live, in all the odor of sanctity. He was the principal warden of St. Stephen's, of which my only brother Philip was the rector. First and foremost in all good works, no name so often headed the high-toned subscription-lists of the various charities as his.

Now you have the whole family, only I have

not described my aunt Kate. A few words will suffice to place her before the reader. She was exceptionally handsome, with a high-nosed red-and-white sort of beauty, seldom varied in her expression, and always looked as if ready to sit to some modern Gainsborough for her picture, wearing in winter trained gowns of the richest material, and in summer such marvels in white, that, what with their tucks and points and ruffles and flounces and lace edgings, they were the despair of every laundry in the city. Things and persons existed for her especial benefit: she existed only for herself. She was Mrs. Orlo Standewort, and uncle Orlo was very proud of her.

You can hardly fail to understand that there was a wide gulf, socially speaking, between this stately representative of an old family and great wealth, and poor little, merry, dimpled, undignified Mrs. Jack Meigs. Jack himself, aunt Kate held in sublime abhorrence, and shook out the folds of her richly-perfumed lace handkerchief whenever he came near her.

Poor dear uncle Jack! He did certainly smell of the wine-cup at times; but if you had seen him in fresh white linen, as handsome and noble-looking a fellow as ever lived, beside uncle Orlo Standewort, in splendidly-fitting black broadcloth, stately, haughty, imposing,

and had you been in want, you would not have hesitated a moment to ask the man in white, with his hand in his pocket among the loose change, for aid and comfort. And he would have given it.

CHAPTER III.

MARY GREEN.

AUNT FLOSSY and I were on the best of terms. Young as I was, she often came to me for comfort, and even advice. We lived some five squares away to the west of Fern Terrace, in an old-fashioned house that had been the Irwin homestead for five generations. That dear old pile, quaint and moss-grown ! I shall never see another like it. Never such maple-trees turning their silvery leaves heavenward with every sweet touch of the wind, such woods not twenty minutes away, with delightfully intangible undergrowth all alive with birds, and quick with the hum of myriad denizens of leaf and mould. Never was I so happy as when, wandering at my own sweet will through this patch of woods which skirted my father's estate, I sought for the arbutus, trailing its soft glossy leaves like a silken net-work among the gnarled roots of the old trees. The drum of the partridge, and the tap of the woodpecker, are familiar sounds to me ; and I never hear the sad

whistle of the quail, even now, without seeing myself as a child, lying under some grandly-spreading oak, listening in the drowsy silence for the innumerable and witching voices of the underworld.

And then the softly scattered snow of the pretty daisies, the shower of gold that starred all the green reaches, and the hills and valleys, called buttercups. To this day I love them with a love passing strange ; for to me no hot-house flower, no well-trained exotic, is so sweet. Aunt Kate Standewort has lectured me time and again, and railed at these evidences of a vulgar taste ; but, with all her æsthetic rallyings, she cannot lecture me out of my first love.

And the house, God bless it ! Why, every nook and corner seems sacred to me,—the wide, low rooms ; the broad halls ; deep stair-cases ; the old carved furniture which Mrs. Hatch the housekeeper venerated because it was so English (she being an English woman) ; the waxed floors ; the library, with its immense baize-covered table always filled with papers, books, and magazines ; my father's leathern arm-chair ; the old tiled passage-way to the kitchen, where the sun always seemed shining on the yellow floor, and where Jenny Finch the cook, who had been with us for almost half a century, kneaded and mixed and beat and baked

and preserved season after season, always bare-armed, always ruddy, always smiling, always ready to lend a helping hand. It is one of the pictures of memory, that grand old kitchen, sparkling with sunbeams, old china, tins of every shape and variety, with its open door, where vines, trees, bushes, fruits, and flowers alternated in picturesque confusion; while through them could be seen the gray rocks, down which, at all times, trickled the sweetest, coolest water in the world.

One morning Flossy came over to the Rookery; for though there never was and never will be a rook on the place, yet my great-grandmother had christened it, and the house went by that name.

“I’m so puzzled!” she said, half-laughing; “and you must help me choose.”

“Help you choose what?” I queried. “Don’t ask me, if it’s gowns or bonnets; for you know you never take anybody’s advice.” By this time I had straightened all the tidies, and pulled the table-covers even, and trodden on Pickwick’s tail, — Pickwick is a glorious Maltese cat, — and reached the bay-window, all vine-covered, where Flossy sat, having thrown down her dainty parasol and her silken gloves.

“Why, Pitney *would* get married, you know; and though she said she would keep on just

the same — Such a capital children's nurse she is too ! I never can replace her."

"Why, you don't tell me Pitney has gone?" I said, quite pained at her roundabout announcement of the fact.

"Yes, for a reason that might have been expected, of course. She intends to set up a nursery of her own; though how they can afford it upon her husband's salary, — he is only a gardener, you know, — I can't imagine. The girl was so foolish ! She'll never find such another home (she herself admitted it) ; but, all the same, she's as happy as a queen. Well, Pitney being gone, the question is, Who can I get to take her place ? Jack put an advertisement in the paper yesterday and the day before ; and this morning ten letters came by mail. Now, how am I to decide ? I wish I had the faculty of reading character by the handwriting that some people profess to have. Maybe you have. At any rate, I came over to see if you won't take the business off my hands."

"Nothing particularly elegant or pathetic, I suppose," I said, as she emptied her satin reticule of the accumulated letters, and proceeded to read them.

"Yes, there is just one there that quite touched me, an orphan-girl's, I think ; but she is ridiculously young, only seventeen."

“Yes, here it is, the first one I happened to open.” I read:—

DEAR MADAM,—I am an orphan, and staying at present with my aunt, who is in delicate health; and, though she has a small pension, it is barely enough to support her own little family. Her husband, who was in the naval service, was lately lost at sea, leaving her with three children. I am respectably connected, and have a fair education; can sew well, and fit children's garments. As to age, you may think me very young; but I believe I can say with truth, that, having been early thrown on my own resources, I am more capable than my years might seem to warrant. I am anxious to find a good home; and I should like fair wages, for it would be a pleasure to me to help my aunt, who is in very straitened circumstances. Hoping that I may obtain the place, and adding that I love children dearly, and have always been used to them; I subscribe myself

Very respectfully yours,

MARY GREEN.

“There is something nice and lady-like about that letter,” said aunt Flossy, looking straight at me with her great brown eyes. “It is well written, carefully punctuated, and not at all effusive. Jack says he would give her twenty dollars a month on the strength of it: you know we gave Pitney fifteen. Only just look at the others!” she pointed to a bulky envelope. “There is one from a middle-aged lady, four pages long. She narrates all her troubles, and

I am sure would bore me to death in the same way with her tongue whenever she could get the chance. There is another, that one in the blue envelope, a widow in reduced circumstances, who has been very wealthy. She, I am afraid, would expect too much. The others are simply abominable as to chirography and punctuation; and I don't want an ignoramus, even for those little creatures. I wish to decide as soon as possible; for by to-morrow and next day I shall perhaps be besieged with applicants, and nothing wearies me so much as letter-reading. What do you think? What would you do?"

"I wish I knew how she looked," I said.

"Yes, so do I. Poor Pitney was so humorously ugly, if I may use a figure of my own. While she was undeniably homely, there was a sort of sunshiny expression in her face, and I suppose that was what captivated the gardener. And then, you know, Pitney was used to Jack," added Flossy lugubriously.

I laughed at that. There were scenes inscribed on my memory too ludicrous, too grotesque, to forget.

"And it makes me nervous," said Flossy, joining in the laugh; "for if she should happen to be pretty or prudish, or extremely dignified, and if Jack *should* — oh, dear!" There

was pain in her voice, though she affected to speak lightly.

“Jack never means to do any thing compromising to his honor as a gentleman,” I said, folding the letters, and replacing them.

“Never, poor fellow! only sometimes he don’t know, unfortunately, what he is about one day out of three. It is such a trial! you can’t imagine it, Tony.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE RECTOR.

PAPA came in just then. He took Flossy's hand, gazing into her dark eyes wistfully ; and then he stooped and kissed her. She was his favorite sister, the youngest, who, as a baby-girl, he had nursed often on his knee, and he was very fond of her. She winked the tears away that had gathered on her lashes, and laughed and chattered to him as if she had never known a sorrow in her life. But, for all that, papa kept watching her with that wistful, questioning, almost grieved look, which I never saw in any face but his.

Suddenly Rose, our house-dog, barked lustily from the garden. There seemed something in the air that brightened us all, even before we heard the little gate-latch click at the end of the garden-path.

"It's Philip," said papa with smiling lips. "God bless him! You can feel his coming like a sweet, clear mountain-breeze."

Yes, that was an apt comparison. Phil's pres-

ence was sometimes like that ; sometimes, when the weather was depressing, and the rain falling, like an illumination. He did not stay with us, because St. Stephen's was in the eastern part of the city, miles down town, and his study in the old church was very easy of access, while he had a pleasant room and board that suited him in the parsonage occupied by his assistant and his family ; but he came to the Rookery almost every day, driving, or on horseback. The sight of his sunny, cheerful face, that looked as if the soul behind it had never found occasion to doubt or mistrust, never looked upon sadness or suffering, never felt any but the highest, purest impulses, toned me like some exhilarating draught. And yet, in his large parish he met, sometimes hourly, with the saddest experiences. But his heart was large, and full of noble desires, and his religious faith decided. The great secret of his strong, grand life, and of his exceptional success as a minister of God, was that he believed that which he preached, and lived close up to the requirements of the gospel ; and an important fact, and one not to be despised, he was in splendid health, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

He gave us a hug and a kiss all round, and then went to the fruit-basket, in which he was always sure of finding something sweet and toothsome.

"What mischief were you two girls hatching between you?" he asked, coming towards us, paring a rosy-cheeked apple.

"We were talking about getting a new nurse," said Flossy.

"Pitney's never going to leave!" exclaimed Phil, pausing in the act of finishing the paring of his apple. "I thought she was one of the fixtures of Fern Terrace."

"So did I," said Flossy, picking up the letter which she had laid aside. "Read that."

"Writes a pretty hand," said Philip, munching his apple leisurely as he read, and taking a bite between each sentence. "Why, the letter is almost faultless," he concluded, handing it back to Flossy. "She must have had opportunities, and made the most of them. I hope she is nice, for your sake, Flossy; but Pitney—oh, it's such a misfortune to lose Pitney!"

Phil got up to walk, and hummed while he finished his apple. He was a striking-looking man, florid, broad-chested, with tawny-brown whiskers, deep-set, large, luminous eyes, a grand head, and a smile that was positively fascinating. If you were ever so annoyed with him, he had only to smile, and presto your anger vanished.

Presently he seated himself at the piano, a semi-grand, which faced the avenue, and I took out my crochet-needles; while Flossy bundled

up the letters which had been lying on her lap, and put them carefully in her reticule, looking meantime dreamily out into the garden. We always enjoyed Phil's playing. Chopin was his favorite among musical composers ; and he rendered that artist's delicious nocturnes with such fervor that I sometimes felt the tears stealing down my cheeks, for music is with me a rapture and a passion.

Suddenly he cried out, —

“ Why, here are the twins !—all four of them.”

Flossy uttered a little cry, and ran to the window. I followed, incredulous. Yes, there they were, all strung in a line, hand in hand, moving forward with the precision of youthful grenadiers, in pink and blue sashes, with collars and without. I had almost said “ one shoe on, the other shoe off ; ” but they were, fortunately, well shod, though one of them had no cap, and all wearing a serenity, if not positive dignity, of expression that seemed to say, “ We come with the profound conviction that we are doing our duty.”

“ Bless their curly heads ! ” cried Phil, making for the door.

“ I charged Phebe not to lose sight of them,” said Flossy, distressed, yet half-laughing. “ How did they manage it ? I shall certainly go dis-

tracted if I don't find a nurse immediately — Why, you blessed little rascallions!" as their sweet pink-and-white faces, all framed in golden curls, made entrance. "How dared you come with nobody to show you the way?" And she looked from one to the other of the bright, laughing, dimpled darlings.

Jack, one of the youngest twins, and the very image of his father, put his chubby finger to his lips, as, slinking a little behind the others, he lisped, —

"Papa's junk!"

"Oh, my boy!" cried Flossy, with a clouded, pained face, "don't speak that way. — Jack must have come home, then, and I didn't expect him till to-morrow. He went hunting, you know, with young Mr. Atley. I hope nothing has happened. Would the children have come if every thing had been straight? Could he have hurt himself?" She looked from Philip to me. Sudden terror had paled her cheek.

"Did they bring papa home," she asked of the eldest twin, "on — on any thing?"

"No: he came alone in a big carriage; but he tumbled coming up the steps, and he tumbled in the hall; and then Phebe" — Phebe was the parlor-girl — "she came, and helped him on the lounge."

"Phebe is equal to it: she could take him up

bodily," said Phil, speaking lightly for her sake. But his forehead flushed as he turned away.

"Where is Mabel?" asked Flossy, as she tied her bonnet-strings with trembling fingers. How we all pitied her!

"She sat in the little chair, and fanned him with his hat," said the youngest little man, wrinkling his broad sash with busy finger and thumb.

"Should she be alone with him?" asked Philip.

"Oh, dear, yes! Poor Jack is never unkind," said Flossy, trembling very much. Her cheeks were scarlet. Phil met my glance pityingly.

"Perhaps I had better accompany you," he said to Flossy.

"Oh, no, no, indeed!—if the boys can stay here for a time: they enjoy it so much!" They all ran for a parting kiss, and came back quite content to remain.

"Poor auntie!" sighed Phil, as he followed her retreating figure, so slight and graceful. "All her money don't compensate for that one drawback on her domestic happiness. If I could only kick that besotted fellow into decency!" which was not very clerical, but honest and earnest.

The boys were romping in and out of the rooms now, and had probably forgotten that

they ever had a father. Phil was soon in league with them ; and they all made a raid upon the pantry, notwithstanding the fact that Jenny Finch was setting the lunch-table, and laughing at their antics.

“Uncle Phil,” called Johnny, with his mouth full of doughnuts, “ask Harry what were the last words of Lawrence.”

“Don’t div up ’e slip !” shouted the younger twin, dancing on his heels, and then falling on his head, where he lay for some time, placidly surveying the ceiling.

CHAPTER V.

TAKING A STAND.

AUNT KATE and aunt Geraldine called that afternoon. They always went together. Dressed, as usual, with exquisite taste, they examined the chairs carefully before daring to commit their precious garments to a closer vicinity; for the numerous toys which we always kept at the Rookery, ready for the youngsters when we had the courage to invite them for the day, were scattered here and there. Phil had lunched, and gone off on an appointment with Bishop Woodville; for there was a convocation in session, and my brother was the bishop's right-hand man. The voices of the twins, shrill, but not unmusical, betrayed their near vicinity; and that was the reason why the chairs were so closely inspected. They were, in fact, on the green at the back of the house, playing at railroading, and had all the kitchen furniture which was movable for cars, with a new-fangled washing-machine, which we could never prevail upon the laundress to use, doing duty as the engine.

"How can you bear the noise?" said aunt Kate. "I could never endure it for an hour."

"When papa is away, I rather enjoy it," was my reply.

"Have you seen Flossy to-day?" asked aunt Geraldine, who had taken up a bit of lace from the work in my basket, and was examining it through her daintily-mounted glasses.

"She was here this morning," I made reply.

"Did you know Pitney was gone? Yes, I suppose she told you, of course."

"She told me, and I read a letter from the nurse that will be. How did you know?" I asked.

"Oh! I was over there," she said, clasping both hands over her portemonnaie. "How any woman can!"

"Yes, what do you think! That poor creature was just crying her eyes out, because Jack was sick with headache. We all know what that means. I'm sorry Flossy is so weak."

"Flossy is strong," I said with a girl's decision.

"I say she is weak, pitifully weak. Why, the man is a disgrace to his profession, to his sex. I'm glad for one thing, heartily glad, he don't go to the communion-table lately: that is something near consistency. He ought to stay away till he learns to conquer himself, if he ever does."

I had been an only child at home for many years, and had always been accustomed to follow the impulse of my feelings. I almost worshipped my aunt Flossy, for I fancied I knew the depth and tenderness of her character. It seemed to me that both my elder aunts, feeling themselves superior to her, were continually throwing stones in the shape of moral reflections; and I felt as if it was time to show them that perhaps they themselves lived in houses of glass, which were liable to be shattered.

"Why," I said, after counting a few threads, and feeling my pulses fluttering through my fingers, "so does uncle Standewort: don't he go to communion?"

"And I should like to know why he should not, Miss Tony?" asked my aunt, looking severely at me, the thin outline of her Roman nose glistening.

"Because," said I firmly, "he sells the very poison that makes uncle Jack a maniac; and I think that is ever so much more wicked, because it is done with cool, deliberate purpose of mind."

"Why, you impertinent child!" exclaimed aunt Kate, her forehead growing red by degrees, "you are entirely wanting in respect. What right have *you* to speak of your uncle

Orlo in that way, and he doting on you? I'm surprised. I'm very much hurt. I cannot come here, if my husband is to be insulted by you to my face. My husband keeps no bar, and his business is entirely in the wholesale line. He is respected for integrity throughout the city. He stands high in the church, and no one gives more for the support of the gospel. Don't carry your defence of poor Flossy's miserable husband too far, or you will disgust us all."

"I can't help it if I do, aunt," I said, now thoroughly roused. "I tell you, in the day of judgment, I had rather be poor, weak uncle Jack than my much respected uncle Standewort."

Aunt Kate stood up, and shook out her flounces. Lightning flashed from her indignant eyes,—and beautiful eyes they were,—odors from Araby seemed to float through the room, for aunt Kate used the best and costliest perfumes. She was very angry, looking down at me from her superb height. I felt a little frightened; but, true to my convictions, I would not take back my words.

"I am sorry you said what you did," said aunt Geraldine, who had waited for some concession on my part; for, as I have intimated, she stood somewhat in awe of aunt Kate. "You have made her very angry, and me very

unhappy. To think you should speak that way of brother Orlo!"

She was following her sister, who did not deign to speak to me again.

Uncle Orlo's image rose before me, tall, dignified, a careful man, who thought and worked and moved by rule, honored by the community, and revered by the church. It was the first time I had ever committed myself; and I had experienced the usual fate of reformers. I told Philip about it when he came home later. He looked thoughtful, and merely remarked that I had been more zealous than wise.

"But, my dear, honest brother," I said, "will men who destroy others, body and soul, have a place in heaven?"

"You are putting it strongly," he said.

"But will they, *can* they?"

"I don't believe uncle Orlo has ever looked at it in that light. He has really nothing to do with the selling of it, you know."

"Nothing to do with it? Why, it is manufactured in his distillery: it is sold in the bar of the hotel which he owns, and in the store where he is a partner."

"Wholesale," said Phil, with a furtive smile.

"Then it is murder by wholesale," was my reply.

"You are getting excited," he made calm

rejoinder. "I never thought my little sister would play the *rôle* of temperance fanatic."

"I'm not a temperance fanatic," I responded with some heat. "I never went to a temperance meeting in my life, and I don't know any temperance people. I drink wine myself, just as you do, sometimes; and all the badges, banners, and upholstering that I see occasionally, when certain associations turn out, seem ridiculous to me; but I never felt as I feel now, that there is one man's soul hanging in the balance. I'm sure the Bible says that no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of heaven; and uncle Jack, with all his noble qualities, is most assuredly a drunkard. Now, if he isn't fit to go to your communion-table, — and he is not, — why should uncle Orlo, who makes the poison, be allowed to go there?"

"My dear," said Philip, "it's not my table: it's the Lord's table. I fully appreciate all you say; but you are not in your usual mood: you are worried and irritated, and full of sympathy for aunt Flossy. Pray remember that uncle Jack is responsible for himself, and goes into danger with his eyes wide open. I love him, but I can't respect him. With such a wife, with such children, and every opportunity for usefulness, he is bent on throwing himself away. As for uncle Orlo, he also has to decide for

or against himself. I have thought of this matter many times before: I have embodied my thoughts in certain sermons, which he could not have listened to without feeling some pricks of conscience. But, as I said, to his own master he standeth or falleth."

CHAPTER VI.

MARY GREEN.

PAPA was as happy as a prince at the dinner-table, with the merry twins on either side. If now and then his dear face clouded, as he looked around on their bright eyes and laughing lips, it was, perhaps, because he remembered their father as a bright, beautiful boy, the pride and hope of his parents, the handsomest child in all the country round.

I was busy preparing them for their return home, when there came a knock at the door, and presently Jenny Finch ushered in a neat-looking girl with a charming face, who came forward, holding little Mabel by the hand.

The child sprang to my neck, kissed me, and then I saw her sensitive lips quiver. How little one can know of what is going on in the heart of a child! I do not doubt but that Mabel understood her father's condition, and could account for her mother's tears. She had been near her father almost all that day, and her little heart was nearly broken with the fear that he was going to die, and leave her.

"Are you the new nurse?" I asked the young girl.

"Yes, miss. I was visiting at my cousin's, who advised me to call on Mrs. Meigs; and the lady took me at once. These are the little boys? Oh, what lovely children!"

The girl in her exquisite neatness, and purity of speech and face, charmed me at once. I was glad for the children, glad for Flossy; for Flossy dearly loved to have beautiful things about her, and Pitney was downright ugly, though people grew to like even her ugliness.

"Children, this is your new nurse," I said. "You must be very good and kind to her."

"Yes; and she must be very good and kind to us," said Arthur pompously, as he put on his cap, and strutted to the door, followed by his twin-brother.

Little Jack looked up confidingly in Mary Green's face.

"Is my papa junk?" he asked innocently.

She did not understand him, nor why I whisked him round, and lured him into an ante-room, where I tried to impress his infant mind with the fact that it was very ungentlemanly to use such a word, and that he must never, never, *never*, so speak of his father again to his new nurse, or any one; which advice or command I hastened to enforce by the gift of a little silver

trumpet I had been wearing as a charm, and which he received with a long-drawn, happy breath, exclaiming, —

“I’ll never say my papa is junk any more,” adding with childish idiocy, “but he does git junk, don’t he?”

“Whether to tell this girl or not,” Flossy said. That was some days afterward. I had run over to have an evening with her, while papa had gone to his Masonic lodge. “You see Jack gave me the most solemn pledges that last time.”

“But hasn’t he given them to you before, Flossy dear?” I asked.

“Aren’t you ashamed to put doubts in my head?” she rejoined, laughing nervously. “Yes, he has; but it seems to me they were not as emphatic. He is doing beautifully now, beautifully! And he is such a dear fellow, when he is himself! You have no conception how charmingly he behaves to us all. Dear, dear! the world seems so pleasant, and life so glorious, when he is himself: we have every thing to make us happy.”

“Where is he to-night?” I asked.

“Gone to the lodge. By the way, when did you see the bishop last?”

“It must be three weeks since he was at the Rookery,” I made answer.

“I want to thank him for that glorious speech he made at the convention yesterday,” said Flossy.

“What speech?” I asked.

“Is it possible you haven’t seen it? Then, you don’t know what a hero he is, and how manfully he stood up for what he considered a principle, with many of the clergy against him, too; because, you see, some of their main supporters are men who sell and make — what is killing my Jack. O Tony!” and she held my hand hard, “if it should ever blunt his sensibilities, and harden his conscience, it would be my unbearable fate to see the ruin of his soul begun on earth. He is tender now, and troubled, at times. He is ready to confess his sin, and to beg me to forgive him, with tears. O Tony! he has laid here upon my heart, crying and sobbing like a very child: for he loves me; there is nothing in all the world he loves like the children and me. Well, I am wandering away from the subject. The bishop stood up manfully for a decided expression upon the evils of intemperance. You must read what he said. I can’t remember; but I shall bless him, and love him for it, as long as I live. But that was not what I meant to say, when I was speaking about this nurse-girl, Mary Green. She is such a nice, tidy, lady-like girl, that I am get-

ting very much attached to her. Do you think I need to speak to her about Jack, to warn her as it were? He might some time — oh, I can't believe it possible! but then, you know, he might come in and frighten her. I don't see how I can do it. I don't see how I can speak."

"I don't believe I would," I said, after a moment's thought. "If he should surprise her in that way, why, she knows that many gentlemen drink, and sometimes they are overcome. Hark! is that uncle Jack?"

Yes: he was coming through the long drawing-room, and not alone. Presently he was with us, quite sober, and by his side the bishop, whose silver hair glistened in the moonlight. What a handsome couple they made! strongly contrasting types of manly beauty; for the bishop was dark, almost sallow, while uncle Jack was more on the blonde order. But the bishop's eyes had all the fire of youth, though his noble head was crowned with locks as white as snow.

"We met at the lodge," said uncle Jack, beaming upon us with his sweet smile; "and I insisted upon bringing him home. Isn't there a bishop's room somewhere in the house, Flossy?"

"Yes, they are all the bishop's rooms, whenever he will honor us," said Flossy, bringing the straw chairs which furnished the summer porch nearer together.

“Mrs. Meigs is very kind, I am sure. Nothing would please me more than to partake of her hospitality,” said the bishop in his rich, even tones ; and then he turned to me, little dreaming that my heart beat faster, and my face grew hotter, at the touch of his hand. For I honored, revered, and loved this man. Ever since I could remember, I had been made happier by one look from him. It seemed to me, sometimes, that I would have gone to the end of the earth at his bidding. Though having no call and very few qualifications for the life of a missionary, I verily believe, that, had he set it forth as my duty, I should by this time have been in the wilderness, either in Asia or India.

I knew I ought to go home, that papa was by this time at the Rookery, and lonely without me ; but I could not resist the fascination of the bishop’s society. I can see myself now, seated on that prettý balcony, the tops of the trees waving softly, catching light of the full, fair silver moon upon their leaves, the long stretch of garden fading away into the dim semblance of a fairy grotto, and on my left, the bishop talking to me about my studies, music, the scenery, and suburbs round my native city, and all in that melodious voice that almost made me tremble with the mere delight of listening.

At last I started to my feet, for the clock struck eleven.

"You will see Tony home, Jack, won't you?" said Flossy; but she looked a little troubled. Jack had not tasted any thing stronger than coffee for several days. He knew everybody; and there were haunts of light and beauty, to the outward eye, on the way. Who could tell by what subtle temptation he might fall?

"You must delegate that duty to me, or pleasure I might rather say," said the bishop, rising, and going in for his hat; and I felt that he really wished it, so I was very glad. Flossy shook me a little bit, and squeezed me, when I kissed her good-night; and Jack winked with both eyes behind the good man's back.

We walked home very slowly, talking of familiar things. The bishop lived in Meriden, some twenty miles to the west of us, where his sister kept house for him. He had never been married; and I had often and often wondered, when I had seen him in the chancel, looking so dignified and handsome in his lawn sleeves and satin robes, whether that calm tranquillity of demeanor had ever been disturbed. Had his heart beat with the raptures or the fears of love? Strange queries at such a time, and in such a place; but what girl in her teens has not, at some period of her life, propounded

him? I was not vain enough to think that because the bishop loved my brother like a son, and always treated me with what seemed to be superior consideration, that he liked me better than any of the scores of young ladies of his acquaintance; but I did feel, as I leaned on his arm going home in the soft moonlight, the aroma of his breath upon my cheek, and heard the music of his voice in my ear, that perhaps (and perhaps only in a daughterly way) I loved him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DARKENED LIBRARY.

MY aunt Kate continued for a long time to cherish resentment against me, though she was far too much of a lady to show it by petty animosities. She still received me with a quiet smile, made me welcome as formerly, with a slight difference, which only I understood. She told me she was pleased to hear that the bishop thought well of me—he was the most superior man of her acquaintance; but she never referred again to Flossy or uncle Jack. I went there, as usual, once or twice a month to tea, with papa; and she played my favorite sonatas—she was a superb musician; but I never—indeed, I never had—felt quite at home in aunt Kate's splendid house.

At the beginning of the season she sent out cards for a reception. Everybody—that is, everybody of any note, the most select and fashionable people in our set—came to her “evenings.” Sometimes the bishop was there. He had intimated, through brother Philip, that

he should positively attend the first one ; and I found myself anticipating the event with a pleasure that made my pulses beat more rapidly, and the blood fly to my cheeks. Papa gave me money for a new outfit ; and I began at once to speculate upon what the bishop would think, and how I should like to look in his eyes. Aunt Flossy was with me when I spent my money, such a nice roll of bank bills ! and, in reality, it was Flossy who chose every thing, from the creamy fabric that was to emerge from the hands of Madame, the French dressmaker (a thing of beauty, though scarcely a joy forever), to the gloves, laces, ribbons, and slippers that were to be accessory to my triumph. My triumph ! I laughed bitterly when I went home, as I recalled these girlish fancies.

Every thing was ready ; and on the morning of that day I ran over to aunt Flossy's in search of some information relative to my lace neck-gear. I was met by Phebe, the parlor-maid, whose set lips, heightened color, and snappy eyes, assured me of some new trouble. Phebe was never very choice of her words. She had been my mother's servant, and seemed more like a humble dependent than a mere hireling ; and she sometimes took advantage of the situation.

"What is the matter, Phebe ?" I found voice to say.

"Oh, the devil's got the upper-hand of Mr. Jack again, that's all!" she said shortly. "He's kicked him, and he's fell like a tableful of crockery; and a grand smash he's made. It's a pity the Lord don't take him when he's on his good behavior."

Presently I heard a great tramping on the stairs; and down came the children, all beautifully dressed, followed by Mary Green. The girl smiled as she saw me; but her eyes were red, and the pretty face looked troubled.

"We's going out for a walk," said master Herbert, proudly holding forth his new boots, one after the other, to be admired; while little Jack threw his arms about my neck, and whispered in my ear with great show of secrecy, that papa was "junk" again.

"A-h! it beats me," said Phebe, with a heavy sigh, as she saw them all file off, little Mabel lingering to look back at me with Jack's own smile, "how any man with such a wife and children as Mr. Meigs has can make such a baste of himself."

Phebe was Irish, and sometimes aired the brogue.

"Where is aunt Flossy?" I asked.

"I don't know—yes, I think she's in the libr'y. She's been up all night, poor child; for he was that nervous he couldn't sleep, and must hould her hand, the villen!"

I found my way to the library, leaving Phebe in her smart print gown and white cap, polishing things generally. Going softly in, that I might not awaken her if she slept, I was startled by the vehemence with which she sprang up, crying out, —

“Jack, is that you?”

“No: it’s only Tony, aunt Flossy,” I said, finding my way to her side, for the room was darkened. I could just see her white face, whiter than I had ever seen it before.

“O Tony dear, welcome! I’m just a bit fagged out, and was trying if I could get a little rest;” and the poor thing smiled a welcome, though the smile looked ghastly.

“You’re in trouble,” I whispered.

“Yes,” she answered laconically. “Jack’s broken his word again—like a gentleman I suppose, as—he—drinks,” she added with suppressed vehemence.

“What shall we do with Jack?” I ventured to say, feeling like a judge with very limited powers.

“I shall do something terrible, I’m afraid, some time,” said Flossy dreamily. “Poor Pitney, how I miss her! The first thing I heard of it was when Mary Green came rushing into my room to say he had insulted her. I had to face her flashing eyes and burning face, and

hide as well as I could the misery and shame I felt. Poor Jack, as you know, in that condition is more than usually affectionate, and would kiss a lamp-post or the black cook indifferently."

"Yes, I know."

"It seems she was just crossing the hall when he insisted on kissing her. Pitney was used to it, you know. She would push him, or take him by the shoulders, and—O Tony! isn't it humiliating?" She hid her pale face in her hands; the tears came raining through her fingers.

"I ought to have told Mary when she first came here; but I was such a coward!" she said a few moments after, lifting her stained face. "It's so hard to say such things of one's own husband; and Jack has been a good boy so long."

"How came he to—get in that condition?"

"Oh! it was the old story,—some one treated him. I think it was Orlo: he can drink so much, you know, and still carry a cool head. I wonder at it. I wonder he dares to offer wine to Jack."

"Or make it, either, with such an example of his handiwork," I said.

"Yes, they used to say Jack drank like a gentleman. O my God, how miserable I am! Sometimes I wish I could die, Tony. I wish

the good Father would take me out of this world."

"The children, Flossy!"

"True, the poor things! but they would be well enough off: you and the rest would see to that. I should only care to take Mabel with me: she is too tender and sensitive for this hard world. I have sometimes thought that it would be a good thing if" — her eyes met mine, and the look of horror in them.

"Flossy!" I cried breathlessly, "I know what you mean. O Flossy! remember God, remember heaven. You wouldn't forfeit your eternal peace?"

The wild look faded from her face, leaving it gloomy, but natural.

"No, Tony! don't look so frightened. I don't suppose I should ever have the courage," she said, caressing my hand, which lay on the velvet top of the lounge. "Twenty-six years old, Tony, think of it, and Jack only one year older! We are a long-lived family, you know; and have I to look forward thirty, forty, perhaps fifty years to terror, humiliation, and desolation, to which widowhood would be a blessed relief?"

"No, dear," I said softly, "Jack will reform; let us pray to God."

"Sometimes it seems as if my every breath was a prayer," she said. "No: God has given

him a power he will not use. But no more of this ;” and she sprang lightly from the sofa, held her handkerchief against her eyes, and then led the way to her boudoir. I looked around at the silken hangings, the bird-cages, the pretty bright toilet-set of costliest majolica, the flowers.

“See, Phebe nas brought in these roses,” she said, smiling through wet eye-lashes : “she’s a good girl, and pities me. Yes, everybody pities me,” she added, with a wail in her voice that made it sound so mournful. “See,” she said, opening a deep drawer in the tall carved bureau, “what a lovely silk suit he bought for me only day before yesterday. He saw it in Delmaire’s window, and must purchase it at once for me, because it is the color he loves.”

“O aunt Flossy, wear it to-night !” I exclaimed, delighted with the pearly lustres, the soft, rich laces. “It will be beautiful with diamonds.”

She shook her head. “That was what he got it for ; but of course I can’t go, and Kate will be rather pleased if I stay away. She hates Jack, I think.”

“I would go,” I said with decision. “I just would take some little pleasure of my life. Jack needn’t go.”

“No : I must stay at home with him. He

will stay at home, I think, to-night : he is always sick a day or two after his indulgence. It seems hard too. What Orlo Standewort can drink without changing voice or color will make my poor boy a raving maniac."

"How did you manage to reconcile Mary Green?" I asked. "I thought she looked a little worried when she went out with the children."

"I talked it all over with her, and explained the matter thoroughly ; then left her at perfect liberty to stay or go. She likes us, though Jack has shocked her so ; but she is a sensible girl, and saw how it was. It seems she comes of a really good family, and has been well educated. She might have made her living by teaching, but she could not find a situation. I decided at once to give her the pay and position of a nursery governess, and, as the children grow older, increase her salary : so I think she will stay. I certainly hope so, for she suits me better than Pitney did. Pitney was so illiterate, though a good soul ; but this young lady — that is what she is, Tony — has always been a close student, and taught herself many things that one does not learn at ordinary schools."

A bell rang.

"That's Jack's bell," said aunt Flossy : "good-by, darling, have a good time to-night ;" and we parted,

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR BISHOP AT THE "EVENING."

AUNT FLOSSY had pressed a little box in my hand at parting. I knew what it was: she had spoken before of giving it to me, — a diamond ring which I had always admired.

"Diamonds do her but little good," I thought, and went home in so demure a mood that papa at once divined what had happened.

"Had I not better go over and have a talk with Jack?" he asked as I sat down to my lace trimming.

"I wouldn't waste my breath," was my rejoinder. "Everybody has talked with him, even the bishop. I suppose he will go on breaking Flossy's heart to the end. How dreadful it all seems, and they both so young yet! But don't you worry, dear," I added, seeing the grave lines in his face as he sat thinking, "it's none of your doing. You never offered him a glass of wine in your life."

"No: but I have drank it at his table; and I begin to have serious doubts as to the propriety

of using it at all, when there are such wrecks in our own family."

"Nonsense, papa! must we all deny ourselves the simple pleasures of life, because one man makes a brute of himself? I will not for one: I will take a glass of wine whenever I please, though, to be sure, it is very seldom I do. Uncle Jack, when himself, is splendid; but I do believe I am going to hate him presently."

Nevertheless, when, at the bountiful table of aunt Kate Standewort that evening, the wine began to flow, and I saw the good bishop wave a benign denial to the servant sent to fill his glass, though mine was then touching my very lips, I set it down with a shudder.

"Why, bishop, you're not a teetotaler, are you?" asked a gentleman at his side.

"I certainly am," was the smiling answer.

"Did you find that wine disagreed with you?" was the next inquiry.

"Oh, no! never to my knowledge: I always drank it moderately. It never occurred to me that I might be encouraging others, to whom moderation is impossible."

"Then you advocate total abstinence," said my uncle Orlo, who was sipping his third glass with his usual air of majestic indifference.

"For the sake of our common humanity, yes," said the bishop quietly, and turned to his left-hand neighbor.

"I'm quite surprised at the bishop," said aunt Kate, who sat near me: "he has thrown a cloud over the company."

I could see little Mrs. Lamprey's face light up, when her husband, who, if report spoke true, drank far too much, refused the second glass. The bishop, who was really a great man, exerted an influence upon him which made that kind woman's heart swell with gratitude. So did mine; for at that moment I saw, as I had never seen it before, the possible salvation of uncle Jack. I looked at the wine-glass at the side of my plate. It was as yellow as gold, and as clear as amber. It snapped and sparkled even yet, an innocent seeming thing; but in its depths I saw poor aunt Flossy's despairing tears; I saw the burning eyes of uncle Jack, red with the fires of madness; I could even discover the patient, wistful, heavenly countenance of the child Mabel, who would have given her sweet little life for him.

How I loved the bishop at that supreme moment! Nothing in all the universe seemed so well worth loving.

"Did you drink any wine?" I asked Philip. He was coming towards me with a feminine bundle of sea-green satin hanging on his arm, whose frowsy hair and great pale blue eyes made her look like a mild maniac.

"I never drink wine at a place like this," he said quietly.

"Yes; and I've been telling him how foolish it is, and what a damper the bishop threw on us all," said the young girl at his side. "I think it mean of the bishop."

"If not here, why at all?" I asked of Philip, ignoring her silly speech. "Is it health at one time, and poison at another?"

"What dreadfully horrible nonsense!" said the pale-eyed young lady, tossing her frizzled head. "I wouldn't want my minister to be one of those awfully awful teetotalers for all the world. The bishop has just spoiled all our fun. If he *is* the bishop, I don't see that he need to rule us in such matters. They're for one's private conscience."

"I didn't know we had two kinds of conscience," I said; "and I think the bishop wouldn't recommend any thing in private that was wrong in public."

"It was very bad taste," said the voluble young lady, "particularly here at Mr. Standewort's. Everybody is talking about it."

"Why? because he runs two distilleries?" I asked bluntly, notwithstanding a warning look from Philip. Uncle Orlo was close at my elbow, and heard every word. "Well, it seems to me, I wouldn't dare go to the communion-

table if I was in such a business as that, not with a clear conscience at least. What does the Bible say about thieves and murderers?"

I looked up. There stood uncle Orlo Standewort, as pale as a ghost, his lips working, his keen, terrible, dark eyes fastened upon me. I could say nothing. I could only gasp, and look about me to find some refuge. Philip might have staid, I thought; but his companion drew him away. I trembled: I was afraid of uncle Orlo.

"Niece," he said, in his low, measured tones, "who made you a keeper of my conscience? What you have spoken was said in my house; but, if I had heard it from the lips of a man, I should have had him shown the door."

"Oh! I can go home, uncle Orlo," I said, my lips quivering, for I felt I had seriously offended him. "But," I added, determined to defend myself to the last, "I shall consider that I have been banished from your house by the same influence that keeps poor aunt Flossy by the side of her drunken husband, when she ought to be here, as happy as the happiest." He turned angrily on his heel.

"What! going so soon?" asked the bishop, who was talking with papa; and in his gaze I fancied I saw an interest that was as flattering as it was unusual.

“Yes : papa must not sit up too late,” I said, trying to speak with calmness, though my throat seemed burning.

“Don’t think of me, my child,” said papa : “I am enjoying myself very much. Your aunt Kate makes these seasons very interesting. I am told there are many celebrities here, and the bishop was just kindly pointing them out. We can stay another hour, I think.”

“No, papa. I — believe I am tired, and — I have offended my uncle Orlo. Please, please come home.”

“Offended ! You ! Why, my dear, Orlo thinks there isn’t such another little woman in ten counties. It would take a good deal, I should think, to change him towards you.”

“It did take a good deal,” I half-sobbed. “I called him a murderer. O papa ! take me home, and I’ll tell you all about it.”

“Well, well, child, don’t cry,” said papa soothingly, not understanding me even then. I felt as if I could keep the tears back no longer, and the bishop, as he gave me his hand, must have heard me sob ; but he had the courtesy to keep silence, and I almost ran out of the room. It seemed to me I should choke if I remained another minute.

I had offended uncle Orlo, mortally offended him. And he had always been so good to me.

Christmas never came but it brought something rich and beautiful from his hands. I thought over his numerous gifts, — the last one, a perfect seal-skin sack, which was the envy and admiration of all my acquaintances. Not because of the value of the gifts did I trouble myself to recount them ; but the esteem, even affection, they represented, had been forfeited, perhaps forever. True, the words were spoken at a moment when I was greatly excited ; and they all knew that reflection was not a habit with me, but that I always acted upon the impulse of the moment ; that, in fact, I had not at the mature age of nineteen outgrown my juvenility, either of imagination or manners. I was very much grieved as I thought it over. I had called uncle Orlo, a man high in civil office, as well as a power in the church, a thief and a murderer. Even papa was shocked when I told him the facts of the case.

"Your zeal for your aunt Flossy should not lead you to be unjust," he said gently. "Jack knows very well that his unfortunate appetite will be his ruin, if he continues on the way he is going now. He knows right from wrong."

"I suppose, then," I said, "I must make a humble apology to uncle Orlo."

"Your own sense of right will tell you what you ought to do, my darling," said papa gently.

I went up stairs quite undecided, and thoroughly wretched. The light was burning low, and the moon sent its clear beams into every nook and cranny ; for the curtains were looped back, and the low bed, the old-fashioned chairs and tables and chest of drawers, all seemed to have a confidential as well as friendly expression, that soothed me as I took my seat at the window, after donning my dressing-gown, and loosening my hair. Then I thought over all the events of the evening, and decided, that, though I might have been right in theory, in judgment I had been wrong. I found myself thinking of the bishop, and wondering what he would say if he knew all ; and yet I would have shrunk from telling him. I dwelt upon the expression of his eyes as he stood by father, looking and smiling on me, and my heart beat quicker, and my eyes grew moist. It was a long time before I slept that night ; and when I did, I was visited by anxious dreams.

In one of them, all the distillers, hotel-keepers, and bar-tenders, with uncle Orlo at their head, went marching round the city. What a procession it was ! And I remember I thought how many fine-looking men there were in its ranks. I thought they all had banners and emblems, a few of which I could read : —

"Men have rights :
One of these rights is to get drunk."

"Down with all bishops and cold-water fanatics !"

"Whiskey is king !
Bourbon forever."

"What have we to do with the women and children ?
They must look out for themselves."

And while I was watching them, and listening to the music, suddenly they halted at my window ; and uncle Orlo, dressed in a black uniform trimmed with gold, an immense feather waving from his *chapeau*, rode in front of the lines, and exclaimed, as he paused before me, —

"This girl calls us thieves and murderers.
What shall be done with her ?"

And a great chant swelled up from a multitude of throats, —

"She must die ! she must die !" and there sounded a clash of swords, and a horrible drum-beat, that made the blood run chill in my veins. The air seemed full of sighs and groans and sobs coming from I could not tell where ; but it just crossed my brain that the innumerable company of those who had suffered and died for ages on ages, through the evil inflicted upon them by men like these, were shuddering and sighing for me. .

Then I seemed to be in their midst, and then

flying from them, they pursuing me. And I saw the bishop, in his white robes, standing on an eminence, and holding his arms towards me. If I could only reach him, and find refuge! But no: again they closed around me; and uncle Orlo lifted me from my feet as if I had been a feather, and with one great shriek I awoke, to find Mrs. Hatch, the housekeeper, standing beside my bed, bonnet and shawl in hand.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOUSEKEEPER.

“WELL, you ’as been going on, Miss Antonia! I ’eard you that groanin’ in my room, that I got a bit frightened: so I ’ardly got my things off before I came in. Such a journey as I’ve ’ad, all night in the cars through a haxcident. Nightmare, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, I guess so,” I said, rubbing my eyes hard, and sitting up in bed. “Oh! I’m glad it was only a dream.”

“Which dreams are hoften so real that one doesn’t know which are which. I’ve ’ad ’em as would have raised the ’air on your ’ead.”

The sun was shining, and waves of red light rippled over the white walls, as the trees outside nodded and danced to the morning breeze. Mrs. Hatch bustled about, shutting blinds, and pulling curtains down. She was an English woman, and had been housekeeper at the Rookery ever since the death of my mother, ten years before.

“I wonder at you,” she said, “at your hage,

leaving things hopen. Why, thieves an' murderers might come in, provided they was on the ground floor. It's a bad 'abit, my dear."

"Thieves and murderers!" the words had grown to be a terror to me.

"When did you get home, Mrs. Hatch?" I asked. She had been to visit her children in the country.

"This morning, Miss Antonia; and, as was to be hexpected, hevery thing in 'eaps. I must say, Miss Antonia, if saying it hoffends, you never *was* cut out for a 'ousekeeper."

"No, Mrs. Hatch: I'm playing a higher *rôle* than that," I said.

"Which there may be 'igher," she said, "but no disgrace to a lady to know 'ow. What are your 'igher *rôle*, miss?"

"Reformer," I replied, with a faint laugh that was almost a sob. "I'm trying to reform people — uncle Jack, for instance."

"Much good may you do, Miss Antonia; but as for 'im, tie 'im in a sack with a good-sized rock in the bottom of it, and 'eave it into the river. That's the only way to reform 'im, drat 'is 'andsome face!"

"And — and," I added, half hysterically, "I'm trying to reform uncle Orlo Standewort."

"'Evings and hearth, Miss Antonia!" cried Hatch, wonder in her voice, incredulity in her countenance, "'as 'e taken to drink?"

“Oh, no! he doesn’t drink any more than usual; he is always sober: but he makes it for other people to get drunk on, don’t you see?”

“*He* don’t make it. Why, *he* is one of the salts of the earth. Don’t you go to saying any think agin your uncle Orlo—such a gentleman as *he* is—always a-doing of good works! and so rich!—a travelling bank, *he* is. Didn’t *he* set my Eben up on a farm, as ’as been the salvation of him? And ain’t *he* as fine a Christian as goes into any church in the land? I wonder at you, miss; though, for the matter of that, I spoze you was only joking. There ain’t a gentleman I know of as I respects more. But I’ll leave you to get up, Miss Antonia. It’s the nightmare, I guess, as put it into your ’ead to talk agin your uncle Orlo. Drat nightmares!”

I dressed as quickly as I could, fighting all the time the vague apprehension of coming evil. I would have given worlds if I had not offended my powerful uncle; but, having said what I had said, how could I recant? I determined, while braiding my hair, just to let things take their natural course, and went down stairs, trying my best to look cheerful. Mrs. Hatch had already set the lagging servants at work. No doubt they regretted that my reign was over.

Papa greeted me cheerfully. We had only seated ourselves, and Mrs. Hatch was pouring out the coffee, when my cousin Will Custis came in, bringing a basket of strawberries of such wonderful size and color, that, as strawberries were not yet in the market, we all cried out in a rapture of astonishment, both at sight of them and him.

"The dean has given us a week," he said, throwing his hat aside, and drawing a chair, on invitation, to the table. "Mrs. Hatch, I came early on purpose to get a cup of your delicious coffee," he added. "I told mother I was coming over here, where coffee was coffee; that, in fact, I only tasted coffee twice a year, during vacations; and the old lady didn't like it."

"No more would I; an' hold she are not, sir," said Mrs. Hatch with dignity, appreciating the feelings of a mother, while secretly pleased at the compliment paid her; for the good woman's one weakness was her coffee, which really was delightful. "Hif they would roast hevery time they made, sir, they would always 'it it: that's the secret of the haromer, sir."

He was a fine, frank, manly-looking lad, was my cousin Will Custis. His only fault in my eyes was, that he fancied himself desperately in love with me.

"That's all there is about it worth having,

the aroma, you know. Where did I get these berries, cousin Tony? well, of a fellow I'm acquainted with out in Stanley. They have hot-houses, and forcing-beds, and every thing of that kind. I bribed these things to grow, over a month ago, fact! There are no berries like them in all the country. I just whispered, you see, when I wanted them, and for who; and *presto* here they are!"

We enjoyed the strawberries, and Mrs. Hatch put some aside for Phil, who was one of her prime favorites. Will and I went out in the old-fashioned garden at the back of the house; and, after picking a few flowers, we sat down on a rustic bench in a natural arbor formed by the branches of two tall chestnut-trees.

"See here, my fair cousin," said Will, after we had chatted about indifferent things, "I heard that you raised a small row over at aunt Kate's last night. Something you said to uncle Standewort, wasn't it? I didn't rightly hear, for I was in the house only about ten or fifteen minutes, and mother said you had put them all out."

"Please don't mention the matter," I said, thinking of my dream, the horror of which I could not yet shake off; but he teased me till I told him, and then laughed heartily.

"I'd have given a hundred dollars to see the

fun," he said. "So you actually shocked that worthy gentleman! He is not accustomed to such treatment. Uncle Standewort has been petted and coddled at home, and by the church and the public, all his life: he seldom hears the truth, you know; and it must have cut hard, by Jove! See here, cousin Tony," and his manner changed, "you're not coming out strong-minded though? not going to join these temperance fellows, or any such common thing as that, eh? You don't object to a glass now and then, I hope. You'll allow one to drink like a gentleman?"

"Poor uncle Jack!" I sighed. "I suppose *he* thinks he drinks like a gentleman."

"Oh, hang uncle Jack! He's a disgrace to the family," said Will, impatiently. "It won't trouble me, no matter how soon he breaks his neck, and he must do it sooner or later; and then aunt Flossy will take some comfort of her life. It's such a confounded shame, and all that, — a fellow mustn't swear, I suppose, — to turn one's self into a brute. And you laid his sin at uncle Orlo's door! Well, that *was* pretty rough. What are you going to do about it? Will their high mightinesses the Standeworts ever forgive you? Uncle Orlo thought you were gold."

"I'm afraid not," I said. "I shall just let things take their natural course. If uncle Orlo gives me a chance, I may apologize."

During that week Philip was at the Rookery nearly every day. Once the bishop came over for us in a splendid barouche, taking Philip, papa, and myself for a long, glorious drive. Cousin Will chose to be indignant and jealous, because I left him at the Rookery, and said some things uncomplimentary of the good bishop on our return, which I resented: whereupon he made love to me more violently than ever; and when I laughed at him, as I always did, he left the house in a rage, vowing that he would never step over the threshold again, and bidding me an eternal farewell. In the morning, however, he wrote me a very humble note, begging that he might come over and take lunch at the Rookery, when he apologized for his thoughtless behavior, and promised to conform himself strictly only to cousinly privileges.

Meantime I had not seen my aunt Catherine or uncle Orlo. Papa went to tea without me twice, and my name was never mentioned by any of the family.

I had taken great pains to write a formal apology, but no answer was ever returned; so, whether I was forgiven or not, I was probably to be banished from the paradise I had dishonored.

Aunt Flossy was very angry when she heard of it, and would have gone at once to do battle

for me ; but that I forbade her. I had done all that my conscience and society required from me, and scarcely gave the matter a thought. We two were more friendly than ever, if that were possible ; and while uncle Jack was on his good behavior, nothing could be more delightful than our interchange of visits, our bouts of sewing and embroidery, our pleasant chats.

But there were lines of care beginning to mar the sweet bloom and brilliancy of aunt Flossy's gentle face. It was sad, at times, to catch that haunted look in her eyes ; an expression like that of a hunted deer, when, hearing the hounds as they gain upon it, it makes frantic, fruitless efforts to escape.

It was a beautiful sight to see her with all her children about her. What they called "mother-time" was between an early dinner and early tea, when she played, romped, sang with them, and was like a child herself.

"I can't expect to keep them always close to me," she would say sometimes ; "and what shall I do when they grow up, especially if they should have an appetite for that dreadful stuff ? If I ever found any man selling it to one of my children, I'd kill him ! I know I should ; and then I would make such an appeal to the judge, and to the twelve men on the jury, that every mother's heart in the land would beat in sym-

pathy with mine, and God and the court would clear me."

One day the oldest twins came in, in high glee, with a toy-bottle of champagne which both had tasted, and which some little play-fellow had given them. It was vile stuff, no doubt; and I shall never forget her look, when she saw what it was. She dashed the bottle into infinitesimal fragments with a quiet fury I can liken to nothing but fire at white heat. Then she ordered soap and sand, and went through the operation of washing their tongues, and finally gave them medicine to counteract the poison. I never saw two such scared children in all my life. Every few moments they came to ask if she thought they were going to die: and she with a solemn countenance would reply that she hoped she could save them this time; she should try very hard. Indeed, it was like a funeral at the house all day. The boys were kept in their dressing-gowns, and watched with painful assiduity, that the poison might have no bad after-effect.

"Tony," she said to me, as I left her that day, "I don't believe those boys will ever hear the name 'champagne' in all their lives, without associating it with this day. I have given them a good, wholesome scare: thank you for helping me, and keeping me in countenance."

How I had kept my own countenance, I scarcely knew. Narrating the matter to papa, I had a good laugh that partly made up for the day's internal discomfort. I could see the solemn faces of the twins, and hear their whispering conversation, as they waited in dreadful suspense for their mother's verdict that they were out of danger, till I closed my eyes in sleep.

CHAPTER X.

TIED UP IN A RUG.

I WAS closeted with Mrs. Hatch one day, when Flossy came to the door, pulling off her gloves in such a state of perturbation that I took her directly up stairs to my own room, where we could be confidential. I saw that she trembled excessively, a sure sign of some overwhelming trouble, and could scarcely wait for her to speak.

“O Tony!” she cried, rolling her gloves up into little balls, and throwing them on the bed, while she sank nervelessly in a chair. “I’ve done it! and I’m so frightened!”

“What has happened, auntie?” I asked, seating myself by her side, and trying to untie her bonnet-strings, while I actually saw her temples pulsate with the strong, rapid beating of her heart.

“I don’t know as I can tell you. My breath has gone.”

I poured out a little lavender-water, and bathed her forehead, pitying her with a vague

pity, fearful of listening to some dreadful revelation. The children,—I dared not mention them.

“Has Mary Green gone?” I asked.

“No, indeed, poor Mary! What should I do without her?” and she began to laugh and cry together, till I was fearful that she might have a severe attack of hysterics.

“Oh! this will never do,” she said at last, lifting her head from my shoulder, and sitting bolt-upright. “How mean of me to come to you with my troubles! but what can I do? Fancy my talking over things with Kate or Geraldine.”

“Say what you will, dear auntie. You know I am pleased and proud to serve you, only I hate to have you suffer so. What is it you have done? no harm, I am sure,” I said pityingly.

“Why, I’ve tied him up,” she said, with another burst of laughter and tears.

“What can you mean, Flossy? Not — not uncle Jack?”

“Yes: you know what you have advised me? Well, I’ve done it! It’s that large turkey rug, with the beautiful crimson centre—and I’ve tied him in it, so that he can’t move hand or foot.”

“O aunt Flossy!” I cried, in real dismay for a moment. “How did you do it?”

“Don’t ask me. I’m glad, and I’m sorry.

He came home last night, or rather this morning, for the clock struck one before I could shut my eyes. I was sitting up for him, of course, as I always do ; though I don't imagine such awful things as I used to, — that he has been killed, or fallen into the river, or got into a brawl. It must have been nearly three when I heard a carriage stop at the door. Two men brought him up the steps, and put him into the hall. I stood at the foot of the stairs, still dressed, and they saw me ; and one of them was kind enough to ask me if I wanted *him* carried up. I was glad enough, though shamed through and through ; for both men were sober, and I saw what they thought.

“They put him upon the bed in his room, as I told them, though they would have laid him on the floor. Such a sight as he was ! Tony, I can't tell you. Mud from his shoes to his shoulders, — oh, it sickens me to think of it, — and that man my husband ! You remember, child though you were, the evening we were married. Oh, how beautiful and straight and bright he was ! Did I dream then that I should ever sit beside such an object as that ? Was it within the bounds of possibility ? O Tony ! how many things I thought of ! — my poor children — worse, a thousand times worse, than fatherless ! I did not shed a tear ; feeling was too

deep for that: I felt, rather, God forgive me, like a murderer. No wonder you shudder, poor child. May you never have such an experience. Yes, Tony, I think I had no tenderness in my heart for the drunken thing that lay there like a log, disgusting, revolting, almost all human semblance faded out. I was tempted — O God! may I never feel that way again. I wanted to strike, to chastise, to — kill him. Yes, Tony, I am ashamed to tell you; but it did seem that those last bitter dregs in my cup I could not drink. A horrible contempt possessed me, a loathing that I cannot put into words. What could I do? Well for me that prayer came to my aid, or my reason might have given way. When I thought of men like Orlo Standewort, of distilleries, restaurants, bars, where manhood loses all that is divine, I longed to kill, burn, and destroy. I wonder my hair is not white, I suffered so.

“Not one tender thought came into my soul for poor besotted Jack. I am sorry for it now, but I knew no mercy: my whole nature was changed. At last my eye fell on the rug between the bed and the window. It was too bad that he should lie on that lovely counterpane, or the lace-bordered pillows, so clean, pure, and dainty. I’m very proud of my beds, you know, Tony.

“Suddenly it came to me what you said, and I wondered if I had the strength. I just pulled up the rug ; and, after much tugging and lifting, I rolled Jack over on it. It seemed a contamination to touch him, indeed it did, my handsome, loving boy ! but I went to work heroically. There should be no half way about it : I never faltered once. He should be punished as far as my weak hands could do it. I was sure there was no possibility of waking him. He never moved or stirred, only breathed in that horrible way so characteristic of a drunken sleeper. I bound it round and round him, leaving only his head free. Then I went down myself into the kitchen, and found a clothes-line. O Tony, how I worked ! It took me two hours ; and a more securely tied-up package you never looked upon. Then I found an old flannel shawl, and cut a place for him to breathe through, that is all, and tied his head up. O Tony, don’t laugh ! I’m laughing myself ; but I feel more like crying. There’s no real danger, is there ? He can’t smother, of course ; and he can’t move absolutely. I don’t see how he could possibly move.”

I laughed till I almost cried at this description, and at the inimitable tone in which Flossy said over and over, “He shall be punished ! I will not keep forgiving and forgiving.”

"But the children," I said. "Will they not find out?"

"How can they? They never come to my room till after their noon dinner, and I gave Phebe her instructions. Besides, he'll sleep, perhaps, all day (he does sometimes); but while he is asleep and unconscious, you see *he* isn't suffering a bit, but *I* am. O Tony! What a fool! but I am. I couldn't bear to feel that he is so utterly unconscious: it seems as if he were dead." She sprang up in a new terror. "O Tony! might he die? I never thought—he *can't* smother—but—O Tony, you never can imagine what an object he is!"

Poor aunt Flossy was hysterical again, and I had recourse to the lavender.

"I got so worried and nervous, that I thought I would come over here," she said, when she had recovered in a measure, "or I should certainly have cut the rope; for I *would* keep going to look at him, and it made me both laugh and cry, both glad and angry."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PACKAGE UNTIED.

I SOOTHED her as best I could, made her drink some tea, and eat a roll ; for she had tasted nothing that morning.

Phil's cheery voice sounded at the foot of the stairs.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't let him come up!" said aunt Flossy, wiping her eyes, and hurriedly putting on her bonnet.

I ran down stairs. Phil was walking back and forth.

"I just called to say that the bishop went off early this morning : yesterday was the last day of convocation, you know. He would have called last night, but some friends came in. See what he wished me to present you, with his compliments."

It was a prayer-book, — the daintiest, most beautiful thing I ever saw. Only a few days before, the bishop had accidentally dropped some ink on the pages of my old prayer-book, and had seemed very much distressed over the matter,

though I assured him it was of no consequence. The prayer-book had belonged to my mother, and I only used it occasionally: so I put it away, and thought no more about it. Here, however, was his apology in a delightful form.

"You seldom see any thing so beautiful," said Philip, pointing to the polish of the delicately tinted ivory covers. "He bought it abroad years ago, but I imagine he was very glad of an excuse to give it to you. He seems so pleased with you!" he added, laughing, pinching my cheek. "He's a lovely old man, is the bishop."

"Old!" I said, looking up; and something in my manner amused him, for he pinched my cheek again, and laughed.

"Why, yes, isn't he? Somewhere about fifty, I should think; though at times he looks like a boy, in spite of his gray hairs. But I must be off. Visits to make as usual. By the way, how is aunt Flossy? I haven't seen her for a week."

"She is well," I said, and followed him to the door. Then I kissed my little prayer-book (I could not show it to aunt Flossy now), put it away, and ran up stairs.

"Is he gone, Tony? Well, so must I be gone. Is it asking too much of you to go with me? Horrible, too, to take you from a happy home to such a place as mine."

"You know I love to go there, aunt Flossy," I said; "particularly when you are in trouble." In a few moments I was ready; and, drawing a thick veil over her face, aunt Flossy went out, and I, after giving a parting word to Mrs. Hatch, joined her at the garden-gate.

We walked silently on, — I in a fever of anticipation, half dreading, although I had acquiesced so readily, to enter the house at Fern Terrace. I looked up at aunt Kate's windows. Not a curtain drawn, the sombre splendor within all veiled from the sunlight. I caught a glimpse of aunt Geraldine at one of the side windows at the Bend; but she nodded hurriedly, as if compelled to recognize me against her will, and quickly vanished behind the rich lace curtains. I felt keenly that I was in disgrace.

"If she will live with such a man," aunt Catherine had often said of her sister Flossy, "and allow his example to corrupt her children, she cannot expect any sympathy or support from us. I am astonished at her obstinacy, and ashamed even to acknowledge her as my sister."

"Hark! What's that?"

Aunt Flossy's hand was on the bell-pull. She looked at me, pale, intent, listening.

There certainly was a tumult within. Was it a scream of terror, or convulsive laughter? Phebe opened the door. Her face was blood-

red, the tears stood in her eyes ; but mirth irrepressible, unmistakable, beamed from every feature.

“ O Miss ! O Mrs. Meigs ! pardon me ; but I think we’re all half dead, that we are beat out wid the laughing. And indade I don’t know how it came about ; but,” and she laughed again, “ the masther is up ! ”

Shout after shout sounded overhead, and then came a heavy fall. Flossy flew up the stairs, I followed. Mary Green was leaning on the balusters, laughing, with both hands covering her face ; the twins were all roaring ; and as we entered the room leading from the bed-room, there stood Jack, who had just been helped up by the twins, fast bound in the rug, nothing visible but his nose and a gleam of white teeth. Aunt Flossy sat down helpless, and laughed ; I sat down helpless, and screamed, as Jack endeavored to jump a step on, with both feet firmly tied together ; the two oldest twins, one on each side, the other two assisting behind with a feeble push, and all laughing except little Mabel, who sat pale, frightened, weeping, and moaning, —

“ O papa ! papa ! ”

Jack made a grimace towards the place where his wife sat, utterly overcome.

“ I say, Flossy,” came in half smothered tones, “ can’t you get out a patent for this thing ? ”

"O Jack, Jack!" exclaimed Flossy helplessly; while Mary Green, wiping her eyes, and avoiding Jack's vicinity, went over to Mabel, and tried to soothe her.

"Mamma, how came papa tied all up? Mamma, it's jolly fun!" laughed Arthur and Harry, who evidently thought the display had been arranged for their especial benefit.

"I'll tell you, boys. A man came through the window," said uncle Jack in thick tones.

"Jack!" expostulated Flossy.

"And he saw me asleep. He was a thief, I expect."

"O Jack!" Flossy again.

"So he tied me hand and foot; and then somebody came in and frightened him off. I do hope he didn't take my watch."

"Papa, we'll go and see," said Harry.

"No, I'm afraid." And Arthur hung back.

Jack took another jump, missed his footing, and fell his length.

If he had hurt himself, I know I should have laughed.

"I was trying to sit down," said Jack apologetically; and in another moment he was rolling from one end of the floor to the other. Even Mabel laughed at his droll antics.

"Much good that has done," murmured Flossy to me, as well as she could for laughing,

while the tears ran over her cheeks. "Who is being punished now? The children will think somebody did get in and tie him, and what can I say?"

The bundle was now lying still; and all the children were atop of it in great glee, trying to find the end of the rope.

"Mamma, that thief must have got our clothes-line," said little Jack; "for there's a tag on it just like ours."

"Flossy, you mustn't go out again and let such things happen to me," said Jack plaintively, nothing but his voice and his shapely nose giving proof of his vitality. "For a rugged man, I feel uncommonly weak. Haven't I made a show of myself long enough? Couldn't you just loose me, and let me go?"

Poor Flossy had to make the best of it. She untied the red shawl; and then, meeting his droll glance, she just laid her head on his breast, — whether laughing or sobbing, how could I tell? I saw a look of pain cross his face still so noble and handsome.

"Tony dear, I guess you'll have to help her," he said a moment after, his voice quite changed and hoarse. "It's too bad!" he added in a lower tone. "What a horrid wretch I must be!" for Flossy lay quite still, half fainting, and the children were getting frightened. It

was pitiful to see little Mabel put her heavenly face close against his, and pat his cheeks and his chin with her snowflake of a hand.

“I don’t hold any grudge about it, not a bit, Flossy,” he said presently in a half whisper; “but I *should* like to know in what shop you learned to tie packages so neatly. Not a bit of me came out. You could safely have sent me to Mexico, with a label, ‘*This side up with care.*’ Why didn’t you? I shouldn’t blame you if you sent me even farther,” he added, *sotto voce*. Dear aunty! she commanded herself nobly, even at that critical moment. Sending the children away with Mary Green, she brought a knife from an escritoire, and cut the cords one after the other. She was not laughing now, and her face was very, very sorrowful.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NURSERY.

I LEFT the room, and followed the little ones into the nursery. It was a very large apartment, in the ell, originally intended for a ball-room. There was a recess, prettily frescoed in oils, where a band might be accommodated. Here, at present, stood the beds of the twins, canopied with white muslin. Mabel and Mary Green slept in a division, parted off by a splendid Japanese screen, at the opposite end of the room. There were plenty of windows,—the one facing the street, and those on the little square, beautifully stained.

As I looked about me, — at the walls covered with pictures, the tables with books and papers, the luxurious wardrobes, dressing-bureaus, receptacles for toys, exquisite ornaments (for it was Flossy's theory to have the eye educated by the best examples of art, as well in common things as in rare and costly adornments), — I thought how sad it was, that, even in this Eden, so wily a serpent had crept, poisoning all its

enjoyments, dimming all its beauty. One is accustomed to associate these lower vices, among them drunkenness, with want, gaunt care, terrible needs and depressions, unhealthiness of food and tenements, unremunerative toil, destitution, discouragement. "Feed the people well," says one, "and they will not turn to drink. Give them some leisure, build them pleasant houses, array them in good clothes, give them cheap entertainments, harmonious surroundings, and they will not want the stimulant." Behold here in Fern Terrace every luxury that heart can wish, every ornament that money can buy, the priceless gift of children innocent and beautiful, a woman's heart with its rich treasures all poured out in lavish profusion at the feet of its possessor, and lo! this monster vice! What panacea is there for the disease which is eating into this man's humanity, and destroying that glorious thing which the Creator has said can be destroyed, soul as well as body?

I looked out and saw, far below, aunt Catherine busy with a dainty waterpot, tending her flower-beds. I did want to call out, "Aunt Kate, give them a good dose of home-made whiskey!" but the dangerous little sprite that whispered in my ear went as swiftly as he came, and the distillery was left in peace, that time.

The children had seemingly forgotten the

episode of the morning. Mary Green had her hands full, distributing toys. Rocking-horses were in full gallop ; only Mabel, her serious eyes seeing things that were afar off, sat rocking in her little chair, evidently in deep reflection.

"What is my little darling thinking of?" I asked, as I knelt down by her side. She threw her arms about my neck, and laid her cheek on mine.

"Cousin," she said with a quick-drawn breath, "if that naughty man had killed my papa!"

"It was only fun, dear : there was no thought of killing," I said, anxious to dissipate such apprehensions. "Don't you think it was fun to see papa hopping about all tied up?"

She shook her head slowly. If she had been capable of such reasoning, she might have said, "I reverence him too much to wish to see him playing the role of a buffoon," for her expressive little face suggested the idea.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TEST QUESTION.

“ISN'T she different from any child you ever saw?” I asked, turning to the governess, — it seemed a much more appropriate title, — “to me she seems almost heavenly. I don't believe she will be spared to us long.”

“If she was more healthy, she wouldn't be so heavenly,” said common-sense Mary Green, with a smile.

“But what is the matter with her? She has never been ill.”

“No; and that, I think, is where the trouble lies. It isn't a sharp, serious illness: it is a languor that is neither illness nor health. I notice it most in the morning, and I have told Mrs. Meigs of it. But she seldom sees the child till afternoon, and then she is measurably bright and blooming: so she calls me fanciful.”

“But what do you think it is?” I asked, gazing into the child's tender, fathomless eyes, whose glance often haunted me, as being unearthly in expression and intensity.

"I think it is inherited,—you will excuse me, won't you?—an inherited weakness. I have studied a great deal about such things, because some time I hope to make nursing my profession."

"But my dear girl," I said, "there never was a brighter, healthier woman than aunt Flossy; and as to uncle Jack"—I paused there. Something in Mary Green's face arrested my little speech before it was made. In all the power and force of their real expression came to me the words of Holy Writ, "The sins of the father shall be visited upon the children." I had thought it a cruel judgment always, and had pondered deeply upon it; but suddenly light flashed upon my darkened senses, and I saw why it must inevitably be so. With what an awful sense of the compelling power of truth did this sentence occur to my startled mind! I looked at my lovely little cousin with new pity, new love, new anxiety. Yes: perhaps that highly wrought, sensitive creature might yet lay all its shocks, sufferings, and even sins, at the door of her father's iniquity.

"But the boys seem well enough," I said. "They are active, energetic, and capable."

"Yes, capable of any amount of mischief," said Mary Green; and as her eyes met mine smiling, it struck me that the girl was extraor-

dinarily pretty. Brown eyes, brown hair, and an exquisite color, with the deepest of deep dimples, and that bonny smile, made up a list of charms that had hitherto escaped me. "I had rather see a little healthy wickedness, though mischief and exuberance of spirits are not wickedness, than a morbid, unworldly little creature, like our dear Mabel here," she added, and then flushed; for we could hear Phil's voice down stairs. The children shouted with delight. A visit from Phil was a treat.

"How good he is!" said Mary Green, with heightened color. "I was always somewhat afraid of ministers before; but he is so cheerful, and full of fun! I heard him preach last Sunday. The sermon just filled my idea of what a sermon should be. Everybody speaks in praise of him, he is so kind to the poor and suffering."

"Oh, here he comes!" shouted the boys; and in another moment the dear, happy face was in the room; and, hat in hand, he was paying his respects to Mary Green as if she were the greatest lady in the land. Her eyes brightened, and her color deepened. And then was inaugurated the grand round of games that he had taught them, till I was glad to get out of the room.

"I'll be round this evening, sis," he called after me. "I've got something to propose."

Aunt Flossy met me at the door of her *boudoir*.

"How is uncle Jack?" I asked.

"Quiet and sweet as he can be, and sleeping like a baby," was her reply. "You must not think him hard-hearted, Tony, because he made light of the situation. The dear fellow is just as sorry as I could wish to see him. And he declares he is quite as penitent as the thief on the cross. He has no remembrance of taking any thing more than a glass of hot lemonade. Some wretch must have drugged it; don't you think so?"

"He should not take even lemonade at any questionable place," I said.

"That's true; but he was with old friends, and he is so impulsive and easily entreated! He certainly is sorry. If you could have seen him, heard him, you would say so. Tony, he is the noblest, the best man in the world, when he is simply himself. Nobody knows him so well as I do. I am so troubled when I look back to last night. It seems like a horrible dream. You don't think the children suspect?"

"I'm sure they do not."

"What a noise in the nursery! Philip must be there."

"Yes, he is there, — as much a boy as any of them."

"They just idolize that fellow, — those boys of mine."

"I would advise you to lie down, aunt Flossy," I said. "Your eyes look tired, and your hands are hot. You're sure of poor uncle Jack now, as long as you can keep him in, and needn't worry."

"Thank you, Tony: I will try and make the most of the sunshine I have. It's very bright and beautiful sunshine while it lasts."

I went out with a happier heart than I had when I came in.

A bird lay panting and fluttering on the sidewalk, near the broad passage that led round to the back of aunt Kate's house. I knew it in a moment. It was aunt Catherine's pet bullfinch, a rare singer; and I lifted it wonderingly. It died in my hand; and full of amazement, forgetting all formality, I ran up the steps, and rang the bell.

The old servant, Jacob, came to the door, bowing elaborately at sight of me, and ushered me at once into the family sitting-room. Aunt Catherine and aunt Geraldine were seated close together, and had evidently been talking earnestly. They looked up, confused and startled; but neither of them rose.

"Aunt Kate, I found your bullfinch out on the walk," I said. "It was dying. It is quite dead."

Aunt Catherine sprang to her feet, pale as ashes, and then fell back, half fainting.

"You needn't have been quite so abrupt," said aunt Geraldine. "You know Hero was as dear almost as a child to sister Kate."

By this time aunt Catherine was sobbing in her perfumed handkerchief, uttering at times broken sentences.

"Take him — Geraldine — I can't look at him. And I hung his cage this morning — just under the porch. It must have been that horrible cat of Flossy's. I'm sure it has taken away — all my pleasure. And that cat shall be killed. I gave a hundred and twenty-five dollars for my poor Hero — that miserable cat cost nothing. It is so hard to have what we love — utterly destroyed."

"That is what poor aunt Flossy says," was my rejoinder, as aunt Geraldine took the dead bird out of my hand.

"Does she know, then? Did she see that nasty cat kill my beautiful Hero?" It was the first time aunt Kate had addressed herself to me.

"Oh, no! she don't know any thing about the bird, and perhaps it was not her cat that killed it. It was what you said that made me think of her, — 'It is so hard to have what we love utterly destroyed!' You know she loves uncle Jack."

"Don't mention his name in my presence," said my aunt, playing nervously with her handkerchief.

I can see her now, the bright tints of the stained window heightening the beauty of her perfect toilet, the flowers in the near conservatory, the rich hangings of the room ; for, as she often boasted, there was no paper pasted about her house, nor an inch of paint used from ceiling to cellar.

"Who destroys him, I wonder ! No one but Jack Meigs. It is very humiliating that we must bear the existence of such a relationship. But that *you*, of all people, should apologize for her and for him ! Are you not satisfied with the mischief you have made ? Why, your uncle was sick for a week after that night of my reception. Nothing ever so went to his heart. He looked upon you as a daughter almost, having no children of his own. And you will lose by it more than you gain. He has altered his will since," she added, with a triumphant little nod.

"O aunt Catherine ! do you suppose that I care for losing any thing he might have intended to leave me ?" I said with some fervor, almost with tears. "I care more for his love and good will than I should for all his money."

"Then why did you forfeit both ?" she asked, angrily.

"I am sorry I said what I did just as I did : I have told him that. And I am sorry he heard me."

"Then you don't think he is to blame for his business. Shall I tell him so?"

I was silent. The question was a test one. When I had spoken as I did, it was but the thoughtless utterance of a neophyte. Since then, the subject had grown to such dimensions, that it appeared to me gigantic. It seemed of as much importance now, as to the Jews was the question, "Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? Has he really come to save the world?" Could I, dared I, say that uncle Orlo was not to blame for pursuing a business that made paupers, orphans, widows, thieves, and murderers?

"Aunt Kate, I don't think I could say that," I made answer. "I don't think he realizes that he is to blame, because, if he did, he is so just, so conscientious in other things, that I am sure he would relinquish the business immediately."

I trembled then ; for her face flushed angrily, and her handsome eyes flashed fire.

"Yes, a nice thing it would be for him to beggar himself and his family ! Where, then, would be the benefactions which he confers upon the world? Didn't he pay ten thousand dollars of our church-debt of fifteen? And this very day his name is up for governor of his

State! Do you suppose his political preferments cost nothing? Do you suppose his business costs nothing? Do you know that he employs three hundred men, and keeps them and their families? I'm sorry for your small contempt, Miss Antonia Irwin; but we can live without your gracious approval. I thank you for bringing in my poor dead Hero; but beyond that I have nothing more to say to you. Good-morning!"

I could not have spoken for my life. Grief for her unkindness, shame for the low estimate at which she held human life and the public good, and a stronger conviction of the sins and consequences of the liquor business, all sealed my lips.

"You are very ready to go and laugh over the drunken frolics of a man whose lady-like wife sews him up in a carpet for the children to laugh at and make sport of."

This was her parting shot, and it unsealed my voice. Some of the under servants at aunt Flossy's had evidently been tattling to the domestics in aunt Catherine's employ.

I was timid no longer. It seemed to me then, and it has seemed to me since, that something beyond and above me used my tongue and my lips. Uncle Orlo came in while I was talking, and stood, like a shadow of something

evil, on the other side of the room. Aunt Catherine also stood up, and shook her perfumed handkerchief at me threateningly. Aunt Geraldine got a hand under my arm, and pulled me out of the room by sheer force. Presently I heard a door shut, and I found myself on the steps, looking bewilderedly down the street. Philip at that moment came out of aunt Flossy's house, and stared hard at me.

"Why, Tony! what in the world has happened?" he asked. "You look as if you had lost all your friends. Haven't they been kind to you in aunt Kate's? I could have advised you not to go there just yet. I think, in time" —

"Philip, don't talk. Let me lean on your arm," I said quickly, interrupting him.

"Why, certainly: let me help you down."

I ran over the steps; but I felt as light as a feather.

"I guess I'm a spirit," I said, trying to laugh. "I can't feel the sidewalk."

"You have been under great excitement," and he led me along tenderly.

"It is said the way of the transgressor is hard: it should read the way of the reformer," I murmured when I could speak naturally.

"Are you not a little too ambitious to attempt to play that role?" asked Philip.

"You know they railed at Jesus Christ: they

crucified him because he told the truth. I see it plainer now," I went on excitedly.

"But you are only a mortal girl, very young and inexperienced," said Philip softly. "I don't think you need covet martyrdom just yet."

"I don't. But the world is very cruel, and the rich" — I said, my eyes blind with tears. "Philip, how many people do you suppose you touch, how many hearts, I mean, with those sermons you write with such burning zeal? How do you feel when you leave the pulpit?"

• "My dear Tony, I have no right to speculate upon such matters. I simply do my duty, and leave the rest to God. If I have touched, as you say, one thoughtless soul on its way to ruin, or even interested it, I have done a great work."

I saw the point of his answer. I was taking all this mighty responsibility upon myself. My strength came again to me. I breathed more freely, looking back no longer in a sort of terror upon what I had done. If I had fulfilled my duty, I must leave the rest to God. He would see to it better than I could.

CHAPTER XIV.

FLOWER AND THORN.

“MY dear daughter, it is not surely right to alienate one’s own kindred,” said papa at the dinner-table that evening. I had told him every thing. It had been my habit since the day of my mother’s death.

“Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !” he continued.

“Yes ; but it don’t say any thing about aunts and uncles,” I retorted.

“I wouldn’t scold her, father : she has had a trying day,” said Philip. “Suppose, instead, I tell you of a little plan of mine and the bishop’s. The bishop owns a cottage at Saratoga, you must know, which a brother of his has generally occupied. At present the gentleman and his family are abroad, and will be all the present year ; so that the cottage will be empty. The bishop declares that you and I and father, and any one else of the family who wishes, must occupy that house ; that I need building up, and

that he don't want anybody else to have it. Now, I propose that we accept his kind offer, and take Mrs. Hatch and such of the servants as can be spared. I talked with Flossy about it to-day, and she thinks she will come and help us keep house for a little while. What do you say?"

"O papa, say yes! It will be like going to heaven."

Phil laughed heartily at my enthusiasm.

"It seems," he went on to say, "that Saratoga is the bishop's birthplace. The cottage is an old one modernized, — the house in which he was born. It is very rambling and roomy, plenty of fruit-trees in the garden, and only a few minutes from the hotels. We can see all the sights, be as select and quiet as we please, — in, but not of, the crowds that make up a fashionable watering-place."

"Is the house furnished?" I asked.

"Completely, and cared for by an old dependent of the bishop's family."

"And," I stammered a little, "will the bishop be there, do you suppose?"

"Doubtful," was the rejoinder. "He will be too busy for pleasure-taking this summer. I believe he contemplates a long Western trip to look after some of the churches in the wilderness. The travelling part of the business will be a recreation, I suppose."

My heart sank a little. I could not hide from myself that one of the inducements, aside from so pleasant a sojourn in itself, would be the bishop's presence, even if he only came now and then to look in upon us. On the other hand, aunt and uncle Standerwort had a cottage in Saratoga (a double cottage), which was occupied by aunt and uncle Custis as well. Twice I had passed a month there, and I had a vivid remembrance of the delights of the place. We should be in Saratoga together, after all; and, as I could not share the pleasures and comforts of the *recherché* cottage on — Avenue, it was with a sort of triumph that I looked forward to enjoying a cottage of my own.

"And, by the way, there are two horses there," said Phil, "and I suppose, of course, a carriage. One of these animals the bishop particularly recommended for your use as a lady's horse. The other is good for an experienced rider, which you are not, you know. Flossy can have him: she is afraid of nothing. Poor Jack! they two used to be the finest equestrian couple in the city. Jack don't ride often now."

"But he may, you know," I said. "If we only get him under our influence, I am sure we can make him behave himself."

"We will try," said Phil, with a dubious

shake of the head; "but I fear poor uncle Jack is destined to be our thorn in the flesh as long as he lives."

"Very well," I said stoutly, "if he is the thorn, and uncle Orlo the flower, I prefer the thorn."

Circumstances thus giving us the opportunity of a change, and that of the most agreeable character, we began to make preparations. Mrs. Hatch covered the furniture, and shrouded the mirrors and chandeliers in gauze.

"Which there's no trusting even experienced servants," she said, "as to the moths getting under the chintz, and makin' chairs and sofys of theirselves, notwithstanding the camphire. I put my trust in no drugs whichsoever. A good garding waterin'-pot full of naphy, and leave 'em with the winders shot for a day or two, — only no light carried in, or you wouldn't know what hurt you, — and your moths is done for."

Aunt Flossy came over to have a talk about it. She was very hopeful for uncle Jack, and thankful, for his sake, that we were going to Saratoga.

"I have not been there since I was a girl," she said. "Of course, I would not intrude upon Kate or Geraldine with Jack; but I feel a presentiment, that, with you and your father and Phil, he will be more on his guard."

Cousin Will was at home, brimming full of plans for the holidays. He came over to congratulate us, and declared that we might expect him every day out of the seven.

"And, if uncle Jack don't behave himself," he said, "I'll horsewhip him."

"I'm not afraid of uncle Jack," I said, as he followed me round, — "not half as much as I am of you."

"What! That I shall be a toper?"

"Oh, no! though you might, in time."

"Thank you! That's a consoling reflection. Then you are afraid I shall bother you, I suppose."

"Yes, that's about it," I made reply.

"Don't worry: I'm on my good behavior," he said lightly; "and, if you don't treat me well, I can find plenty who will."

"Bravo! That's what I have been trying to impress upon you for the last two years," was my laughing response.

"And you think I've learned the lesson."

"I hope so: you repeated it very well just now."

"Thanks! Only be sure and let me know when the wedding comes off."

"What wedding?"

"Yours. It looks a little suspicious, taking possession of the bishop's house beforehand."

I kept down my temper, though my cheeks burned. Cousin Will had seated himself at the piano, and picked out the notes of "Come to the wedding." I never wanted to box his ears so badly in all my life.

"Don't be a silly boy!" I said, laying strong emphasis on the word "boy," because that was a weapon he always winced at. "You have no right to use the bishop's name in that way."

"If you knew how ridiculously people talk!"

"Let them talk: the bishop don't care. He looks upon us both as children, and you know you are a whole year younger than I am."

His cheeks flushed now. Nothing annoyed him so desperately as to be taunted with his youth. He turned on his heel, whistling softly, and I thought he was going; but presently he touched me on the shoulder.

"I am off for home, — either to hang myself, or get drunk: which would you advise me to do?"

"Hang yourself, by all means," I answered, laughing. "Then, don't you see you will be nicely out of the way, while, if you get intoxicated, you may harm others as well as yourself."

"Cousin Tony," he said harshly, "do you hate me?"

I felt a hot tear fall on my forehead. He

was leaning over me, and I looked up in unfeigned surprise.

"Will," I said, "I love you dearly as a cousin, and you know it; but you will persist in tormenting me by your foolish protestations. They are foolish, though I believe you are in earnest; but, if I were you, I would stay away from Saratoga this year. Why don't you go gunning in the Adirondacks, and come home as brown as a berry?"

"Because — you very well know why," he said.

"Then you are lacking in good sense as well as moral stamina," I responded. "You know I think of you only as a cousin. Don't cause me to lose what regard I have for you, and to look upon you with contempt. I stand in the way of your promotion. You are less of a man than you should be on account of my unfortunate relationship to you. You will never be a man if you don't conquer yourself, cousin Will. It is absurd that you should give way to such fancies; and I wish you to understand, once for all, that I shall never regard you with any other than cousinly love and respect."

"Good-morning, cousin Tony," he said (and his voice was harsher than before): "I shall not come to Saratoga." And he was gone.

Although I kept saying to myself that it would make a man of him, and that he was too

young to have other than a friendly interest in me while his studies ought to absorb all his attention, yet I could not but feel for his disappointment as keenly almost as if I had lost something out of my own life. It was some time before I could banish the look in his eyes, or the tones of his voice. I was very busy rummaging over my wardrobe, selecting certain things for a little furbishing, and making notes for certain additions, which all girls know is very fascinating employment; and, by the time the dinner-hour came round, I met papa quite tranquilly, and I was no longer perplexed as to how my cousin Will regarded me.

That evening uncle Jack came over with his wife, and made himself so agreeable that we were all quite willing to forget the past. While, however, papa was playing chess with aunt Flossy, uncle Jack, seated on the sofa beside me, referred to the spectacle he had been made to appear so recently, with a certain air of contrition that seemed to me an earnest of his future well doing. So nobly handsome he looked, so thoroughly good and gentle, that I did not wonder at my aunt's unfaltering love through evil as well as good report. Philip ran in to read a note from the bishop, who was delighted at the idea of making us his guests, although he would himself be present only in spirit. It was with

mingled feelings that I listened to this pretty little token of his kindness. Cousin Will's words rang in my ears; and I could not but acknowledge that any thing the bishop might say or do would have an influence upon me. If he was not in all my thoughts, he certainly was in the greater part of them.

CHAPTER XV.

AT SARATOGA.

MEANTIME the friends of uncle Orlo were working hard to secure his election as governor of the State. It was at this time I learned what an immense power is lodged in capital for the furtherance of political ambition. Before that, it had never occurred to me that men bought position. Some of the richest as well as most ambitious men in the country were owners of distilleries, and persons otherwise concerned in the miserable traffic. Even the railroad monopolists were not so sure of power; and politicians (by no means those who were obscure, and confined all their logic to bar-rooms, but men high in position) were ruled and governed by that one dangerous element. A traffic so universal, so remunerative, carried on by men deaf to the finer feelings of humanity, is not only perilous in itself, but fatal to the best interests of a republic. Like cunning gamblers, its aiders and abettors are careful not to show their hand, but work through the medium of

gifts and favors, wine suppers, and gorgeous entertainments. Then, to crown all, they are generally rich enough to buy by simple barter the souls and consciences of the hungry many ready to be bought.

"We have the power and the means," said one of these men, in a certain convention, "to run this country; and virtually we do run it."

The man who was on the opposite side was every whit as capable as uncle Orlo, — perhaps more honest, but not as rich. He had neither distilleries nor banks to back him. Though uncle Custis was the president of the Merchants' Bank, ostensibly, uncle Orlo owned both him and the institution. Uncle Custis was not a liberal or a broad-minded man; but he was devoted to wealth and power, and could be used by the brighter mind of my uncle Orlo, who had placed him in the way of promotion: consequently he was, in a sort, uncle Orlo's mouth-piece. He talked well and fluently, and had a way of making himself popular with people beneath him in position. However this was done, — whether by small bribes, or an exceptional suavity which pleased women and children, and men who had families depending upon them, — he certainly obtained an immense constituency for uncle Orlo.

Uncle Orlo was elected governor; and, in

consequence, his visit to Saratoga was delayed. As for aunt Catherine, she had reached the top of her ambition. No queen could be prouder, no sovereign more gracious. If I had been in her way, no doubt she would have forgiven me on the spot. Handsome and dignified by nature, success made her a brilliant woman. She purchased a new carriage and two splendid grays. There was not such a turnout in her set, what with the silver-and-blue livery of her servants. Although I still supposed myself in disgrace, she could afford to be gracious; and every pleasant day her magnificent equipage passed before our wondering eyes, and sometimes she stopped for Philip to come out, and speak to her. I cannot describe the grandeur of my two aunts, in their "Worth" carriage-toilets, sitting suave and smiling, on cushions of satin, receiving homage from the pleasure-seekers, and admiration from the *habitués* of the place. Now, if I had been in good odor with my powerful uncle, I might have enjoyed a girlish triumph in being paraded as the governor's niece. I was not quite insensible to the honor I had lost; but I consoled myself with my pretty pony and trim little carriage, in which aunt Flossy and I fairly divided the honors with our grander relations. For aunt Flossy was as beautiful as either of her sisters, and much

younger and more charming; and I was very sensible of my own good points, though they were few, being summed up in eyes and hair and a complexion that no art could emulate. Sometimes we got out of its nook in the roomy stable a quaint, lumbering carriage, still grand in an old-fashioned way, and filled it with children, who, singing, and waving bouquets or flags, made themselves friends on every side by their beauty and joyousness.

And then the long, low parlors at the "Hermitage" (for so, on entering the bishop's cottage, we had determined to call it), with their decorated panels, brown waxed floors, and beautiful home-made as well as imported rugs. Nothing could be more bewitching than the outlook, facing north, when the wide glass doors were opened, and the light streamed within upon century-old furniture, kept in polish by the hands of servants who venerated every thing that had belonged to the bishop's family. Mother Anna, very old and decrepit, lived there the year round, — either in a little lodge which was built specially for her, or in two neat convenient rooms over the ell of the cottage, recently added. She had been the bishop's nurse, and nothing made her happier than to talk about "her chile." Her bright eyes, gay turban on week-days, and snow-white handkerchief on

Sunday, aided by her rippling gray hair, prominent and wrinkled forehead, and finely formed though large features, made her a striking picture of well-preserved and irrepressible Africa. Such giant words as rolled out of her capacious mouth, at times utterly unmeaning, yet powerful from their very ambiguity, and resonance of sound! —

“I’s ’stracted an’ strickened wid de nugeralgia in all my jints, and de construction roun’ de muskles ob de bone-pan ob my knee,” was the lucid answer she made me one day when I noticed that she was in great pain.

The outlook from the wide glass doors of the parlor was quite as beautiful as the interior, — an old wilderness of a garden, in which currant, gooseberry, and blackberry bushes had grown to almost the size of trees, where great cabbage-roses lavished their perfume, rioting amidst paler blooms of pink, violet, and yellow.

A statue here and there, dimly seen through veils of falling water, goldened by the sunshine or silvered by the moonlight, at all times cool, refreshing, and beautiful, — such was the place where the happy children ran and shouted, or rested and chatted, and dreamed day after day. Philip often took them all out for a drive; and we, left alone, busied ourselves with our sewing, and listened to uncle Jack, who, lounging

in some capacious chair, read aloud ; the modulations of his voice making richer music than I had heard from many a popular barytone. It was a pleasure to listen to the voice, even if the words had been meaningless.

Uncle Jack and Mother Anna soon became the best of friends. There was something in the man's simple, loving character, that commanded the homage of inferior natures ; and the old woman waited upon him as if she had been his devoted slave. We had agreed between us, before we left the Rookery, that we would bring no wine or spirits to Saratoga ; that, if any thing of the kind was really needed for medical purposes, we would get it at the apothecary's. Even papa gave up his customary glass at table ; and uncle Jack seemed rather pleased, than otherwise, at his enforced abstinence. He had pledged his word, as alas ! he had done many times before, that he would not go out for stimulants ; and I think he was trying religiously to keep it.

The third week he seemed in low spirits, and aunt Flossy began to look anxious. The weather had been trying for some days, furious gales alternating with drizzling rain ; while the temperature was such that we were forced to keep the glass doors shut, and build a fire in one of the open grates in the parlor. The

window-panes streamed with great globes of tears ; the rain dripped monotonously from bush and tree ; and though aunt Flossy opened the sweet-toned piano, and sang the songs we were all fond of, yet uncle Jack kept up his walk, — now moving to the window, and wishing that Phil would come ; anon listening to the childish laughter that came from a room on the other side of the hall, where the children were holding high carnival.

Presently little Mabel came in, in her dreamy way, and begged permission to “sit up with papa.” Uncle Jack seemed glad to see her, welcomed her with many kisses, and she sat snuggled in his arms, sighing in the very fullness of content. I wondered of what he was thinking as he sat looking down upon her, — of his own aimless life, of the child’s future, or if he were merely enjoying the satisfaction of contemplating her angelic beauty. He certainly was not happy. He might have the sense of success in conquering his appetite, but I doubted if it was conquered. Old memories, old enjoyments, probably presented themselves to his mind’s eye. Was he strong enough to dislodge them ? or was the tainted blood rioting and bounding in his veins, calling for that evil comradeship which had at certain times gained such an ascendancy over his imagination ?

Nothing in all the history of man as a creature of intelligence is so strange as that unexplainable affinity which exists between those who are only similar in the matter of appetite. Poor uncle Jack would have touched glasses with a stable-boy, fastidious as he was in other matters, when that insatiable appetite came upon him.

Mabel fell asleep.

"Shall I take her into the nursery?" he asked of aunt Flossy, who had turned from the piano, and was regarding him earnestly.

"Perhaps it would be better," she said; and then we looked at each other, dread in our eyes, hearing him go up stairs after the nursery-door shut to.

"It is dreadful to see him in this mood," she said.

"Oh, he will get over it!" was my rejoinder, more to keep up her spirits than that I believed my own words. I was longing for Philip to come. He had been called away to some sick person, and there was no knowing when he would return.

Uncle Jack did not come down.

"I wonder if he has a light?" queried Flossy.

I went out into the hall, and up the stairs, I scarcely knew what for, and had reached the landing which communicated with the stairs leading from the back part of the house, when

I noticed the strong aroma of brandy. Then I saw the gay handkerchief and black face of Mother Anna: in one hand she held a small stone pitcher; in the other, a tumbler and spoon.

In a moment I divined what was about to occur. She saw me, and started.

"Turn back!" I cried in a hoarse whisper. "Go down: something has happened." She wheeled about, and went down stairs again as quickly as her infirmities would allow.

"Fore de Lord, chile! you consterpated my heart till it almos' stop from de cirkelation," she said, pausing in the kitchen-passage, and turning round.

"What were you doing with that brandy?" I asked.

"Gwine to gib it to Mars Jack! He say his sperits bubbles below de surface, and he want somethin' to fetch up de bubbles. I knows what a gentleman means by dat, bless you! an' so I sergested dis yar brandy."

"You couldn't have done worse, Mother Anna. Would you have him a raving maniac?"

"Good lor! Don't want no raving maniuks 'bout here," she said, her black eyes rolling. "Sperits from de dead I can bar — dem I sees sometimes. He can't drink it, eh?" she added with a queer, droll look.

"No, he cannot; and you must never get it for him. Make any excuse. I'll pay you for all you have on hand, if you'll destroy it or bury it while he is here. I wonder you use such stuff while the bishop is so set against it."

"Dar's a deference twix de bishop an' *me*, Miss Tony," she said with due impressiveness. "*I* doesn't countenance my chile in all tings. Ef he had arxed me, — an' I hev give him consolidation an' advertisement more den once, — I'd a said, 'Take a *leetle* for thy stomach's sake, Timothy.'"

"Yes. But uncle Jack don't need it for his stomach's sake: he wants it because he loves it. You must never, on peril of your life, Mother Anna, offer uncle Jack any kind of strong drink. If you do, I don't know but what his poor wife would curse you."

"But what will I say, Miss Tony? He's guv me lots o' money."

"I'll give you twice what he has given, if you'll put the stuff out of the house. And tell Mrs. Hatch, please, to have some of her strongest coffee for dinner, and promise me before you go, that you will never again offer uncle Jack any kind of spirits."

"I won't take no oat; Miss Antony. I's never twisted my mouf in a lie yet: you kin trust me."

"You must promise me," I said.

“Will a swar do?” she asked naively, “cause I ken swar I won’t. But I can’t take no oat; that’s agin my conscientiousness: an’ I’s a church-member more’n forty yars.”

CHAPTER XVI.

AT THE HOTEL.

UNCLE JACK came down stairs tardily. I could read his disappointment in his face. However, as soon as he had drank two cups of strong coffee, his spirits seemed to revive.

"Who wants to go over to the hotel?" asked Philip. "It don't rain, and the moon is coming out gloriously."

"What is going on?" asked aunt Flossy, with a dubious glance at uncle Jack.

"Oh! the usual programme, I suppose," said Philip, — "flirtation, dancing, promenading. Come, ladies, go get your kill-alls on. There's such a change in the weather, you won't need any wraps. It's glorious out."

"I'm going, for one," said uncle Jack, nodding his curly head with decision.

"Where is our little governess?" asked Phil.

"Why?" Both Flossy and I spoke.

"Isn't it half a pity to keep her mewed up here, when she might enjoy the panorama as well as we?"

"I don't know why she shouldn't," said Flossy dubiously.

I ran into the nursery. Mary Green sat writing; and a very pretty picture she made, in her neat black silk.

"Do you want to go to the hotel with us?"

She looked up, her lips parted.

"I should like it," she said slowly; "but—I fear I should be in the way."

"Not a bit of it. We should have thought of it before Phil proposed it." Her face flushed and paled. "Hatch can stay with the children."

"Am I fit?" And she looked over her plain attire.

"Black is always the correct thing. Wear your white kiss-me-quick over your head; and I can lend you some white gloves."

"I have white gloves," she said, and put aside her table, while I went up stairs to my room to make a few changes in my toilet.

"I'm so nervous about Jack!" said Flossy, coming in. "If we should see Catherine—and he—should—should"—

"Oh! you must manage to keep him with you," I said, a thought tired of discussing Jack and his failings upon every occasion.

"I'll try," she said with an accent of bitterness. "But a wife has no rights, Tony, which that drink-fiend is bound to respect. Appetite

is king. However, I must bide my fate," she added, attempting to speak lightly, and drawing on her gloves. "I can't think he is willing to disgrace me, thoughtless as he is."

The glancing lights, the perfect music, fair, fitting forms dancing in and out of the open doors and windows that let on the balconies, the brilliancy of the toilets, the beauty of the assembly, formed an agreeable contrast now and then to our rather monotonous evenings at home. We had not yet become sufficiently acquainted to entertain much company, nor did we care to; for we had always the pleasant alternative of going to the various hotels.

Dancing had not yet commenced. Ladies were promenading with their escorts, and quite a little court was formed about the more brilliant belles by a party of midshipmen, gorgeous in blue-and-gold, that had that day arrived.

"We may as well retire to the shades of private life," said Phil. "There's no chance for anybody while the brass buttons are round. I wonder why women are so fond of uniforms."

"Because they represent bravery, danger, and possible heroism, I suppose," was my reply. "As for the men, there's not one of them as handsome as you or uncle Jack."

"Thanks!" he replied, pleased with the compliment. "Uncle Jack is a splendid fellow;

and how beautiful Flossy is looking! What kind of a dress is that?"

We often called her "Flossy," without the prefix indicating our relationship. She seemed just one of us, not only in appearance, but in youthful feeling. Always dressed in exquisite taste, to-night her toilet seemed to outshine every thing near her, although it was simple, such was her grace of form, and ease of manner. I described the dress to Philip, who listened with his head on one side, looking at it critically. It was a bluish gauze over a pale blue satin, with frillings of fine lace at the neck and wrist, and ornaments of pearl.

"Why didn't you put on something nice?" he asked.

I had on a rich black silk trimmed with rare lace; but, man-like, color was more attractive in Phil's eyes. Mary Green had wrapped a thin scarlet mantle over her unadorned black suit. I verily believe Phil thought her better dressed than I was. I could excuse him, for she certainly looked very pretty. Suddenly a low murmur sounded on the air.

Enter Governor Standewort and his lady.

I had never seen my uncle appear to better advantage than when he came into the splendid drawing-room, aunt Kate on his arm. Successful in every thing he undertook, handsome, with

a cold, proud bearing that became his station, he looked every inch the high official that he was.

"He bears his honors well," said Flossy with a little gesture of pride. "Doesn't Kate look beautiful in that dress of creamy satin? That's her last 'Worth' dress," she whispered. "Geraldine told me about it. Well, I trust she is happy: she certainly seems so. Dear, how soon they are surrounded! Long live the Queen! I do hope they won't come round here. No—they are taking seats on the other side."

"Why, there is cousin Will!" I said; "and what a pretty little creature on his arm!"

"Oh, yes! Master Will is having fine times. He came yesterday. I met him, and asked him to the Hermitage," said Philip.

"Did he say he would come?"

"I have forgotten. I think he did, though."

Poor Will! I still remembered our rather tragic parting; but I was very glad to see that he had consoled himself. No doubt aunt Catherine had helped him to renounce me, as I sincerely hoped he had. I congratulated myself upon my firmness. I said to myself, "Some girls would have kept him dawdling after them, just to show their power, and for the sake of having an escort. Young creatures like that have no true idea of love. If it were the bishop, now"—and I pictured to my imagination his

grand figure entering, his face all purity and light, his silvery hair, conspicuous by its beauty, when suddenly somebody touched me.

"Let me introduce to you Miss Hildegarde Tracy."

It was cousin Will; and the little lady by his side, as *petite* and beautiful as a fairy, won my heart at once. Her lace draperies, just touched here and there with silver sprays, became her well.

"Are you amused with this kaleidoscope of the social world?" asked Phil, with his most serious air, after we had all been introduced.

"Perfectly delighted," she said with the frankness of a child. "It is my first season. I have been at the convent school all my life, and I feel like a bird let loose."

Cousin William whispered to me that her father was a senator from the South, worth his millions — "or has been," he added.

"I am so glad!" I said. "Keep her, if you can. She is as pretty as a picture."

"Since you won't be any thing but a cousin," he said pathetically, and there was a twinkle in his eye, "I will."

"Do, there's a good boy!" I retorted. "I knew you would come to your senses."

"If you call me a boy, I'll have my revenge," he said.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY.

JUST then a gentleman passing in our vicinity stopped to speak to Philip. His resemblance to the bishop, both pleased and startled me. He was tall, and rather grave-looking, reserved in manner, faultlessly dressed, — perhaps you have observed, dear reader, that there are very few men of whom this can be truthfully said; but it was true of him, — and he carried himself superbly.

“Who is he?” I whispered to cousin Will.

“The youngest son of Gen. Woodville,” he answered; while little Miss Hildegarde, whose tiny person and childish manners scarcely harmonized with her queenly name, talked with aunt Flossy and uncle Jack with all the freedom of a pretty neophyte.

Then Phil turned, and introduced me. I certainly experienced a new sensation as those brilliant eyes met mine, — a curious mingling of respect and admiration; for surely so must the bishop have looked before care had whitened his locks.

My new acquaintance asked me to promenade, as there was quite room enough on the piazza, although some of the *habitués* were dancing even there.

"Your name is familiar to me," I said as I took his arm. "Are you related to Bishop Woodville?"

"He is my uncle," he said. "Our family represents the army, the navy, and the church."

"The bishop is my friend," I said. "I am very proud to say so: he is such a good man!"

"Y-e-s, very good; a little queer, don't you think? He is considered as being somewhat in advance of the age. He always has been, a stride or so; and people generally find it difficult to follow him. Do you dance?"

We found an incomplete set, and took our places. It was a great luxury to dance with him, particularly as everybody seemed to watch us with more than usual interest.

When the fans went up, I always knew what would follow. You have seen that little action, which is a movement by itself. It says as plainly as it can, "I am talking about you;" and one finds one's self wondering what it is she can be saying,—what part of your dress, your dancing, or your face, is being criticised.

Presently we walked again, and then joined the Lancers. To my astonishment, as well as

satisfaction, I found myself in the same set with aunt Catherine (whose partner was an elderly man), and aunt and uncle Custis. The bows on both sides were, as usual, very ceremonious: beyond that, they took no particular notice of me, though they were all smiles for young Mr. Woodville. I was certainly very proud of my partner, who did not seem in the least willing to lead me to a seat, but for the third time took me for a promenade through the room. Presently we were stopped: indeed, it seemed as if the crowd were forced back upon us, while I heard the tones of my aunt Kate's voice.

"Will you be kind enough, sir, to stand off my train?" she said. I could just see the back of a man a little to the left, and that he moved confusedly. And again my aunt spoke, —

"Will you have the politeness, sir, to step off my dress?"

There was another movement, and still the request was repeated the third time, on which ensued a little scuffling; and a voice that I knew responded.

"Well, Kate, if you are the Governor's wife, you needn't have had such a confoundedly long tail-piece to your gown. I — I can't find the floor."

It was uncle Jack. The people laughed au-

dibly as at last they passed on : but I caught a glimpse of aunt Kate's face ; it was crimson, and she looked thoroughly crestfallen as well as angry. My own cheeks were burning ; for I suspected that poor Jack had taken his glass of brandy, and that the usual effects were following.

"Who is that fellow, I wonder? Is it Meigs, who married *her* sister ; and by the way — Oh ! I see," he added, confused and stammering.

"Yes, that is uncle Jack Meigs," I said, feeling ready to cry, more for poor Flossy's sake than my own. "I wonder, that, in an elegant hotel like this, they can keep a bar," I added. "The word seems too vulgar to speak."

"But when a man drinks — like a gentleman," — began my escort.

"Please don't !" I said impatiently : "I have heard that phrase too often. The bishop is the finest gentleman I ever saw, and he had the courage to discountenance the custom, both by word and deed."

"Yes," he said, smiling, "the old gentleman *is* a little eccentric."

"Eccentric !" I said hotly. "Do you call adherence to a noble principle eccentricity? I wish to Heaven poor uncle Jack were eccentric then !"

He looked down at me, for he was very tall ; and I blushed, much as if I had been praising the bishop to himself, there was such a strange mingling of the two faces in this one.

“Your enthusiasm does you credit,” he said, still smiling : “it takes a great deal of courage, in these days, to draw the line between inclination and principle. Still, I don’t go so far as the bishop. I don’t like the stuff ; never take it by myself — only socially. As a society man, I should scarcely know how to refuse, I candidly confess. Besides, I don’t believe in any infringement upon one’s liberty. You think it is vulgar to speak of a bar : I think it equally so to speak of a pledge, as if the word of a gentleman were not sufficient.”

Poor uncle Jack’s arguments all over again — society’s argument repeated. I remembered when uncle Jack had used almost the same language, scarcely five years before, — that he didn’t care for drink for its own sake ; never drank alone ; but that, as a society man, he took it occasionally, “like a gentleman.” How was it now ? Then his eye was as clear, his color as bright, his voice as strong and youthful, as that of my new friend.

I was anxious only to find aunt Flossy. Meeting Philip, I set him to hunting up uncle Jack, who, it seemed, was afterward tripped by

another of the ladies' trains, and was rescued by uncle Orlo, who happened to be near. That gentleman was overwhelmed with disgust at uncle Jack's familiarity.

"Sir," he said severely, in an undertone, "you are a disgrace to your family."

"See here," said uncle Jack, with that ridiculous gravity which partially drunken men sometimes assume, "don't you go to putting on airs with me, if you are a governor. I was born a gentleman; and, if I do drink now and then, I never got my money by running a groggery. Put that in your pipe, and smoke it, brother-in-law Standewort."

Philip told me all this, and said that those who were standing near seemed to appreciate the point, and that uncle Orlo Standewort was furious. He brought uncle Jack back to us, and we all coaxed him home in time to save him from open disgrace.

As for me, I put on my thinking-cap with my dressing-gown, and sat long at the open window, thinking over the occurrences of the evening; and when I went to bed I had firmly resolved never, *never*, to marry a man who was not as abstemious, and for the same reason, as the bishop.

Young Woodville had asked permission to call; and, after that, our evenings were often

brightened by his visits. Uncle Jack had promised again, and was on his good behavior. He took up his neglected studies, and began to think of reviving his law-practice, in which decision Philip encouraged him. Indeed, I believe that Philip was his safeguard; and that, could he have been with him at all times, the passion that overcame him might have been conquered.

The Governor and his lady were very much aggrieved, particularly as some one made witty comments on the affair at the hotel, in one of the newspapers published at that time. Their grand equipage rolled by us now without doing us the honor of stopping. Papa, who was very nervous about family difficulties, tried to patch up a peace; but the dear, quiet old gentleman found the dignity of the new official so overpowering, that he rarely attempted to visit them. They entertained handsomely, but never invited any one but Philip, who, however, always sent regrets, and only now and then, at papa's suggestion, called at the cottage on — Avenue.

Mrs. Hatch was very angry at this neglect, as she called it.

"They olt their 'eads 'igh, Miss Antonia," she would say. "Not that it's haltogether to be wondered at; for I know somethink of it,

because I had a third cousin, on my mother's side, as was wife of a lord-mayor oncet; and, bless you! the style 'e put on for a stationer as 'e ad halways been; and come up from country with a shillin'-piece in 'is pocket of the hage of ten! Never you mind, Miss Tony, the full ear o' corn never stand up: it's the hempty one as do that. Them never comes to no good as is ashamed of their hown, even if they do take a drop too much."

I assured the good woman that it did not trouble me; and it did not. Every moment of my time was taken up with my duties, my reading, the children, chats with aunt Flossy, rides with Philip in the pony chaise, and sometimes delightful excursions on horseback, far into the country,—aunt Flossy, uncle Jack, Philip, and I. At home there was the garden always; and uncle Jack had rigged up a pretty little tent enclosing one of the small fountains, where we often took tea or ices, and which diversion set the children wild with pleasure.

Mary Green dressed herself like a lady every pleasant afternoon, and took her charges to one or other of the hotels, where they attracted general attention. They were not only handsome, intelligent, well-dressed children, but accessible and daintily polite. They had formed no bad habits: they spoke if they were spoken to, and

always responded to any pleasant advances. Their perfection of manners made them great favorites. Even the "Governor's wife" was proud and fond of them; and, if she met them in their visits to the hotel, she was quite willing to avow her relationship, always with a word of contemptuous pity for their father, poor uncle Jack!

One of my daily pleasures was to fill the room with the perfume of the sweet old-fashioned roses that grew in such profusion at the very door.

Young Mr. Woodville said it was like coming into a rose-garden; and, indeed, he seemed to like it. He came very often, sometimes every evening, — now to invite me to the hotel, now to a walk; but generally he liked to stay at the Hermitage, and sing and chat. He had a fine tenor voice, and we got up a very respectable quartet.

And so the days glided on; and to me they were filled with the beauty and serenity of perfect peace. Gradually the bishop's image had come to be superseded by this new, frank, noble young face, with its eyes of luminous beauty, its smile of wondrous sweetness. I could not disguise from myself, nor did I care to, that he was growing dangerously dear to me. At a grand fancy ball we took the char-

acters of Napoleon and Josephine; and I thought, if Napoleon looked half as handsome and kingly as his mimic counterpart, it was not to be wondered at that the empress adored him.

Our happiest evenings were those spent at the Hermitage. We taxed our brains to provide amusements that should keep uncle Jack at home, and we succeeded very fairly. One day Philip came in to tell us of an excursion that was to come off on the following Thursday, and we all decided to go. Mr. Woodville was only too anxious to join our party; and we looked forward to the day with bright anticipations.

Mrs. Hatch promised to get up a grand family lunch; and Mother Anna declared that no one should fry the chickens but herself.

"My chile, de bishop—he know what I kin do," she said, standing on the old back-porch, her thin dark figure strongly outlined against the white, vine-covered wall. "I's frickashoed chickens eber sense I's so high; an', to fricka-shoe, you's got to hab de cullenery 'sperience ob de ages; 'sides which it am got to be borned in you, or you may frickashoe an' fricakshoe till yo' die, an' 'twon't be nothin' but burnt chicken, arter all."

"Don't you think Aunt Sally does it very nicely?" I asked her. Aunt Sally was the cook.

“Sho, chile!” — and nothing could exceed the contempt that crossed her face — “*she fricka-shoe!* You wait till yo’ see what *I* kin do in my ole age! Wait till you see dem chickens come up, de wings, de legs, de tenderline, de bres’, all covered wid a fine brown coat, wid little specks ob gold all ober ’em! Aunt Sally frickashoe! — when some is yuller, an’ some is red, some is crusty, an’ some is as bar as your arm! Dat ain’t no frickashoing: dat’s de ignoram devices ob de debil (for you knows de debil sends cooks), an’ I never took no lessons under him. *I’ll frickashoe dem ar’ chickens!*”

And she did. They were to be done in the morning; Mother Anna was up at four o’clock, and at five she placed before us a dish that I should like to have seen painted. As she had promised, it was all covered with what looked like a rich golden brown crust, varying nowhere in color, and promising much toothsome enjoyment.

We had all been very busy the night before in packing our hampers, to which each one had contributed something. Philip brought grapes that made one’s mouth water, and fruits of different kinds: so did Mr. Woodville. Flossy added a cake, which she made with her own hands from an old family recipe. I had also tried my hand at cake of two or three kinds;

and uncle Jack made delicious sandwiches. The two eldest twins contributed their quota of nuts and candies, which they had bought with their own money. How happy we were! No shadow of coming trouble clouded the fair horizon of our anticipations. We were like children, — buoyant, irrepressible, frolicsome, and even boisterous.

“What would the Governor’s wife say?” queried Philip in the midst of our fantastic mirth; for we had rigged the men out with white aprons and paper caps, and attired ourselves in a similar uniform.

“I only wish she would come in,” said Flossy. “I wonder if she will go on this excursion?”

“Why not? It’s to be the cream of the cream,” said Mr. Woodville.

“And,” I added, “she could have a bite of ‘frickashoed’ chicken”

CHAPTER XVIII.

NO CHAMPAGNE.

THE baskets were ready, all but the 'fricka-sho,' and made a very imposing appearance.

"The champagne will go by itself," said Mr. Woodville contemplatively. "I'll see to that."

"Champagne!" cried one of the twins, coming over from his play among the lounge-pillows. "That's *rank poison*! It almost killed us once. Mamma had to wash our mouths with sand, and give us medicine."

Mr. Woodville looked incredulously from me to Flossy, and saw that we assented to the fact, as far as our suppressed smiles would warrant. Flossy took her boys by the hand, and marched them into the nursery.

"My wife is a good hater of things," said uncle Jack. "She scoured them. God grant they may never know *that* thing but as poison!"

"You hear," I said in a low voice to Mr. Woodville, — "no champagne."

"What in the world would an excursion be without champagne?" was his response.

"Sure enough!" laughed uncle Jack. "It would be like bread without butter—to those who like butter."

"What do you think, Philip?" I asked.

"Leave me out of this discussion," said Philip, beaming like an angel. "Settle it among yourselves."

"But, Philip, you are a clergyman," said Flossy, who had come back, and was looking anxious.

"You can't expect him to say any thing," said uncle Jack. "Some of his principal members make it and sell it."

Philip winced at this home thrust.

"You must not think of taking champagne!" I said, as uncle Jack moved away.

"But it will look so—so singular," said Mr. Woodville. "All gentlemen are expected to furnish themselves with champagne. We don't want our friends to give it to us."

"Of course not," I said. "You don't want to drink it."

"Oh, that's out of the question! We don't wish to make ourselves conspicuous. We need not drink more than a thimbleful; but really—to go without"—and he looked as if no greater misfortune could possibly occur.

"Then you can't give up society habits and fashions for principle," I said.

"Well, candidly, I don't feel myself called upon to do so," was his reply.

"Then, Flossy, you and I will stay at home," I said, more in sorrow than in anger.

"I don't like to do a thing for the sake of expediency, and that's what it will amount to," said Mr. Woodville; "and it is not my honest conviction that I ought to abstain."

"But for uncle Jack's sake," I added, when the latter had left that part of the room.

"But somebody else will offer it to him."

"Then somebody else will be responsible: I don't want you to be."

"Well, then, I will do it because *you* ask me. I would do any thing you ask," he said, his handsome face lighting up, "except to sign away my liberty. *That* is one of the impossibles. But I shall feel like a sign set up for the daws to peck at. It will be awfully miserable, I'm afraid."

"You must be very fond of champagne."

"Well, it *is* rather like a friend who amuses you, — you miss him when he is gone."

"Even if he does you no good?"

"He does do me good. He makes me laugh when I should otherwise be dull."

"But suppose you were like uncle Jack. You can see by his restlessness, that the power of this temptation is upon him, notwithstanding all his best friends can do to counteract it."

"I shall never be like your uncle, Miss Antonia," he said, with unconscious pride and sarcasm that cut me cruelly.

"Do you suppose he ever thought that *he* should be bound hand and foot by the power of appetite? But don't let us argue. I am tired of argument. You have been kind enough to comply with our wishes: all I can do is to thank you from my heart."

He gave me for answer an expressive smile, which made my pulses bound with pleasure; and yet I was sad. I knew the convictions he professed and was governed by; that pride was his strongest sentiment; that he came of a military race, in which love of command was inherent, and any weakness heartily despised; and that, unless some great crisis occurred, he would never consent to give up what he called his "personal liberty." I dared not dwell upon the thought that I loved him, the dawning possibility that he was more than interested in me.

Powerful men in all ages have not been able to resist an obedience commanded by their superiors in rank, although they knew that they were acting in antagonism to their own purest impulses. So he, with his fine, high-toned character, was obeying the behest of fashion and custom, though through his inmost convictions he must long ago have seen their hollow-

ness and even sinfulness. Could I break this chain which the habits of a lifetime had forged? I questioned if I had the power; and, if not, then he and I could be nothing to each other.

Morning came, and the horizon was tinted "like Greek skies after rain." The children were up betimes, merry and noisy; and Mary Green had her hands full. The big carriage and the phaeton were made ready. Three of us, with three of the children, packed ourselves in the roomy old vehicle, the rest in the phaeton; and the baskets came after, in a hired cart. How fresh and exhilarating the morning was, laden with the rich perfume of orchard, field, and valley! A sense of perfect happiness filled my whole being. I asked no more of Heaven: I was content just to breathe, and accept the glorious beneficence of nature. We were all looking our best after a night of refreshing slumber. "Let us forget all care and anxiety," I said mentally, "and make unto ourselves a perfect day, oblivious to every thing but the genial, beautiful present." It was a long but delightful ride to where the pretty steamboat lay, that was to convey us to the picnic grounds; and a delightful company — none too many and none too few — were there, leaning over the guards, standing in groups, seated in easy-chairs with books and papers; while the little ones roaming

over the deck gave a home air and feeling to the scene. A young man with a basket at his side presented every one who entered the boat with a souvenir in the shape of a blue rosette, which was pinned conspicuously on hats, shawls, and sashes, and gave an added brilliancy to the occasion. Cousin Will came forward with his diminutive lady-love, whose charming face was far prettier by daylight than gaslight. The children soon found occupation; and we arranged ourselves as best suited us, keeping as much together as possible. Then the band came marching down, playing delightfully; the steam-whistle piped as if it were piping its very soul out; the hot steam ascended in airy spirals, taking on such delicate, aerial shapes, that one could almost see angels' faces peeping out of them: a few sharp puffs, and we were under way.

"I sometimes wish," said Flossy as we passed noisily down the lake, "that I could adopt Mary Green."

She nodded to where Mary was standing, her really pretty face shaded by a large brown straw hat. Phil was addressing himself, now to the children, and anon to her. I could not mistake the expression of her face whenever he spoke to her. It was almost worshipful.

"Phil, come here," I said a few moments after. "Sit down, I wish to talk to you."

"You quite awe me," he said lightly, "you look so solemn."

"I want to awe you. Don't talk too much to Mary Green."

He started, and drew a little away, catching his hat, which, had it not been fastened by a ribbon, might have blown away in the sudden gust.

"Because the poor girl is a dependent, shall she have no cakes and ale?" he asked.

"She shall have plenty of cake, but no ale," was my reply. "But I didn't mean that. I saw you when you were talking with her; and you have such a caressing way with you, as if, one might say, you specially liked her."

"And what if I *do* specially like her?" asked Philip, looking furtively that way. "Isn't she pretty and good, and all that?"

"Of course she is, but"—

"And I have just learned that her grandfather was a clergyman, and that she is the grand-niece of one of our noblest naval heroes,—one who, though dead, lives in history."

"Yes, but"—

"Well, give us your reasons."

"She — is — only — a"—

"Governess," said Philip. "Well, suppose you had been left a poor girl, with your present intelligence, fine taste, and education, how would

you like it said of you that you were '*only*,' etc?"

"I was thinking," I feebly murmured, feeling all my props leaving me, "of what people would say."

"*That* for what people would say!" said Philip, snapping his finger and thumb. "Mind you, I don't say I'm in love with this interesting girl, who dares to rejoice that she is not dependent upon others for her support; but I do say, that, among all my acquaintances belonging to the higher walks of life, I have never yet met her equal."

"She will be a grand woman," I said. "I have often thought so; still" —

"Hardly suitable to be the niece of Governor Standewort, eh?"

"Distiller!" came to my lips; and then we laughed heartily.

"Nevertheless, I thank you," he said a moment after. "You know, I must not seek a wife to please my uncle, the Governor, my church, or even nearer home, but myself. Marriage will in one sense make or mar me, I am so dependent upon my surroundings. I sometimes think I ought never to marry." The conversation dropped there.

It was upon this delightful excursion, which I shall always remember as one of the happiest

occasions of my whole life, at least that part of it, that Harry Woodville, my Harry, told me the story that never grows old. We were sitting in the bow of the boat, and the conversation had gradually drifted to reminiscences of his family. He told me of his father, who had been in many of the battles of our late war; of his mother, who had died during that terrible struggle.

"The strain was too much for her," he said. "She had relatives in the South, and lost two brothers in the Union army. Since then I have felt like a waif; for it seems to me there never was a mother like mine, so true, so sweet and tender. You are the first living person I have ever met who resembles her; and if you ever see my mother's picture, hanging in our old home at Greysburg, you will say, I am sure, that you recognize your own likeness."

I hardly knew what to reply. I felt flattered and honored; but my lips were sealed, and I could only show my appreciation of the delicate compliment by my looks. He went on then to speak of his education, — that his father had hoped to make him a doctor of medicine; but his own utter distaste for the profession had prevailed, and he was left free to make his own choice, which was civil engineering.

"From the first time I ever saw a theodolite,"

he went on, "and a man with a measuring chain, I was crazy to survey; and I have been on several expeditions, and lately have been offered a fine position by one of the best engineering corps in the country. In two or three years I hope to make my way so that my fortune will be assured. I shall feel a greater pleasure in earning money than inheriting it."

And then came murmured words which I can trust to no other ear,—sacred, beautiful words, that penetrated my heart, and made me forget that the world was other than a very paradise, and we two the first glad occupants and sharers of all its glory and beauty.

I could not answer then and there: but I only asked for a little while in which to reflect, and make up my mind; and he assented, though with some reluctance.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR EXCURSION.

IT is a trite saying, that nobody can be young twice. Perhaps, also, there are some occasions that can never be repeated. We may see the same things, follow in the old footsteps, seat ourselves under the same trees, try as far as possible to surround ourselves with the remembrances of that one white day; but, alas! the sweet glamour of it is gone forever.

Every thing pleased us, every thing was beautiful. The children behaved like little angels; and though we had no champagne, yet Mother Anna's "frickashoed" chicken tasted none the less toothsome, supplemented with tea and coffee, and delicious lemonade. We carried with us one of those miracles of invention, an outdoor stove, over which the teakettle sang as merrily as if it had been boiling in its own special nook by the chimney-corner; and there were chimney-corners in the Hermitage.

It was a pleasure by itself to see papa so happy, as if all that could come back of youth

had returned. The twins claimed him; and little Mabel was never weary of wandering around to find flowers, her tiny fingers clasped in her father's hand.

"Where is papa, dearest?" asked Flossy of the child, as she came sauntering along, her hands full of wild red roses, not long after dinner.

"Papa wanted to go to sleep," said the little one innocently; "and he told me to come and give you these pretty flowers. See, he picked them for you and me."

"Yes, they are beautiful," said Flossy, accepting them, and kissing the bright lips. "But where did papa lie down?"

"Over there," said the child pointing to an opening between the trees, — "after the gentlemen had gone."

"What gentlemen, my child? Do you know them? Who are they?"

"No, I didn't know them; but papa did, and he was very glad to see them. They brought some bottles that made a loud noise when they opened them; and papa drank something out of a silver mug, but he wouldn't give me any."

Flossy turned away in cold despair. The presence of his innocent child had been no safeguard, then. -

"If I had only gone with him!" she said to me.

"Then did papa lie down?" she asked, turning to the child again.

"Yes: he said he felt sleepy."

"Stay by cousin Tony," said Flossy to little Mabel: "I must go and see."

"Let me go," said Harry, lifting his supple length from the ground.

"No. I may want you to find him by and by," she said sorrowfully; "but I will go now. Thanks."

"How can a man with such a wife as that make clothespins of himself?" said Harry.

"You see he can," was my reply.

At a little distance off we could see Phil swinging the children, could hear their loud, gleeful laughter; and for the first time in my life the laugh of a child smote my heart sore.

"Does she intend to keep up this sort of thing?" asked Harry. "Why don't she leave him?"

"Because she loves him," was my reply; "and because she promised, before God and man, to stay by him through evil as well as good report."

"That's true," he said seriously. "I didn't think of that. After all, it is the poor woman who has to suffer."

"Yes. It makes no difference whether she drains the bitter drops out of the chalice of

gold or the broken mug of delf," I made answer: "the suffering must be borne."

"By the way, it is growing chilly. Is the wind rising?"

Philip came up, the boys all hanging to him wherever they could catch hold.

"There's an ugly cloud over there," he said; "but the captain, who is experienced, thinks it will only be a blow. The day has been so preternaturally beautiful, it wouldn't surprise me if it ended with a storm."

"O Philip! these lake storms are sometimes terrible," I said, rising both from my seat and my perfect content. It seemed as if, like the day, my happiness had been too intense to last.

Flossy came back, pale and trembling.

"Is he asleep?" I asked.

"No: I can't find him. I went as far as I dared," she murmured, seating herself apathetically.

An hour later, when Philip and Harry were both coming back, with uncle Jack between them, a childish voice was heard on the clear evening air, —

"O mamma! papa's junk!"

Yes, uncle Jack had met with some friends, — fiends I should have said; but the word has a painful truth in it, just as it stands. For these people, gentlemen who had engaged the

boat, and planned the excursion, the captain had been obliged to delay his return; and now, when every thing was in readiness, and the boat under way, it would be quite dark, for the storm was near and threatening. But, before the tempest burst, we were all on board; and, as we sailed, the clashing of the cymbals and the beating of the drums could not drown the long, loud roar of thunder that now and then filled all the atmosphere.

The boat was by no means crowded: there was plenty of room in the cabin, small as it was, for the ladies and children.

"You'll let me come with you, Flossy, won't you?" asked uncle Jack in half audible tones, as he leaned in at the cabin-window: but the men had improvised a shelter upon deck; and as uncle Jack's moods in his present condition were rather uncertain, Philip concluded that he had better stay outside.

"I'll protect him, don't have any fear," he said.

"Flossy, just give me your hand," said uncle Jack, who was now in a resigned and apathetic state.

She put her hand out of the little window. He kissed it again and again.

"Flossy, why don't you kill me?" he murmured, the tears running down his cheeks. "I

don't d'serve to live — I know I don't. You could get along without me, couldn't you?"

"O Jack!" said Flossy bitterly, "I had almost rather see you dead, I do believe, than as you are."

He nodded his head with drunken gravity.

"That's so. That's the woman I love, by Heaven! And yet I've never made her happy. I don't d'serve to live — I *ought* to die. Somebody ought to kill me."

I saw his face by a flash of lightning just then. How could a thing so beautiful be so weak? The great brown eyes, the noble brows, every feature perfect as if chiselled, and all overspread by an expression of anguish that no painter's brush could convey on canvas, even in trying to portray the terror of a lost soul.

"O Tony, this is awful!" sobbed Flossy, when they had taken him away, not without some resistance on his part; while the thunder rolled, and the waters seethed with that furious living sound that thrills one in a storm. "I'm so glad the children are asleep! I don't suppose there is any danger; but — I almost wish Jack had come in here."

"Don't worry yourself, dear," I said. "There are two strong men to care for him."

"But, Tony, what did I say? I was so worried and troubled I scarcely know. I — I —

said I had rather see him dead, didn't I? Oh! how could I? I think I'll go out and look after him." And she arose, staggering.

"Flossy, sit down," I said, with a little show of authority. "You must not leave the children: I could never take care of them if any thing should happen."

"If any thing should happen?" she echoed hollowly, sinking back, and dropping her face in her hands. "If — any — thing — should — happen — O Jack, Jack!"

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE LAKE!

I COMPELLED my courage, which seemed now and then oozing out at my fingers' ends, to stay by me, only when that vivid, red-hued lightning seemed to smite the very heavens in sunder, giving us one terrible view of the black night, and the troubled, foaming, leaping waters for miles away, melting into a yet deeper darkness, a more horrible gloom.

"All right, Flossy!" said a cheerful voice at the little window. Philip stood there.

"Where is he?"

"Asleep out here, resting quietly. Don't be at all apprehensive: we will look after him."

"O Phil! how good you are!" and she lifted her tear-wet, pale face.

"Nonsense! I'm only doing my duty. We're bowling along capitally. There's no danger, rough as it is. The captain thinks the violence of the storm has spent itself. Now, I'll go back. Remember Who has us in His keeping."

Flossy looked at her watch a few minutes

after. It wanted a quarter to nine. At that moment a shrill cry rang through the little cabin, —

“Papa, papa!”

“It is Mabel!” said Flossy, springing up. Again that mournful cry. We could see Mabel struggling, her eyes wide open, in Mary Green’s arms.

“Bring her here,” I said.

Still the child, though on her mother’s lap, seemed neither awake nor asleep. Her eyes shone unnaturally. Flossy tried to quiet her with loving words and caresses. But still she struggled; and again and again, with every evidence of horror and affright, she repeated the beloved name, “Papa, papa!”

“My darling, wake up!” said Flossy. “Oh! what shall I do with her? She must be dreaming still!”

Suddenly the child relaxed the tension of her frame, threw her arms about her mother’s neck, and sobbed so pitifully that those who were near seemed affected almost to tears by the sight.

“What is the matter, my darling? What were you dreaming about papa?” asked Flossy.

But the child, even in that state of terror, did not appear to know; only that she was frightened and terribly shaken was very evident. The

lightning was quite as blinding now, but came at longer intervals. The boat went slower and slower, and at last stopped.

Questions of fear ran from lip to lip. The sound of hurried feet and men's voices blended with the roll of thunder. Once the captain said, —

“For God's sake, gentlemen, keep quiet! It's all right.”

Philip came to the window again, and looked in. Was it the lightning that made his face so ashy white?

“We're getting on nicely,” he said. “Don't be anxious.”

“But, Phil,” I made reply — “the boat has stopped.”

“Oh, no! there's not the least cause for anxiety about the boat. We are only going in another direction.”

“Keep watch over Jack!” said Flossy, with white lips.

“I will,” he answered, gave me an anxious look, and turned away.

I noticed that his voice faltered. I felt the ship turning, stopping, going on again, turning. My head began to throb and swim, and I had to fight hard to retain my composure. Something *had* happened, I knew it.

Something had happened to uncle Jack!

I looked at the mother and child. I remembered what Flossy had said so unwittingly, only the words were wrung from her, — wrung from a suffering woman. I looked out upon the seething water. It was heaving and shining, like the black glass thrown up from the fiery volcanic furnaces of the far south. The sight of it made me shudder.

People began to nod and whisper, and to look over at us. I felt defiant as well as heart-sick, and stood in front of poor Flossy, ready to protect her, if need be, and to hide what I could not help seeing in every face. The boat was now steadily on her way. The storm seemed nearly spent. We were almost home. Only for Flossy's sake I was outwardly calm. Philip's parting glance had signified that I must watch her, and keep my own self-control, otherwise I should have rushed out on deck, and demanded to know the worst. The children, wakened by Mary Green, unaccustomed to late hours, were fretful, and it was all I could do to keep them in tolerable order.

"Stay close by Flossy," whispered Philip, as he met me coming out a little ahead of the rest. "You have need of all your fortitude now — Jack is in the lake!"

He caught my hand, seeing me stagger and blanch. Indeed, but for his grasp, which

crushed and hurt my fingers, I am sure I should have fainted.

"They are going right back," he added hurriedly. "There are boats out now. You can see for yourself, that, in all this hurry and confusion, Flossy must not know. I shall go in the phaeton with father. Mr. Woodville will take you and the children. Crowd in anyhow, and, if she speaks of him, do the best you can."

"Tony!" cried Flossy. I turned back, with a cold anguish at my heart which I pray God I may never have occasion to feel again.

"Will you take two of the little fellows, dear? Mary Green has two. I'll see to Mabel, who hasn't got over her scare yet. Of course Jack will be safe in Phil's care."

"Leave every thing to Philip," I said. She did not notice my shaking voice, and in the semi-darkness could not see how white I was.

In stepping over the water, down the gangway, I thought how black it looked, save when it surged into the lights from shore and the steamer. And Jack was down there somewhere. He had taken poor Flossy's impulsive words to heart, even in the state he was, and I knew my aunt never would forgive herself. As we entered the carriage, Flossy looked back and round.

"I am so anxious about Jack!" she said.

"Let me help you in," said Mr. Woodville, moving about in what, but for the circumstance, I should have considered an officious manner, — ordering Mary Green, hustling the boys round, and finally seating himself beside the driver.

"I'm glad they took the phaeton," said Flossy. "Phil will be careful, I'm sure."

And two of us heard her with aching hearts. It was as real to me as if I had seen uncle Jack's dripping corpse, his handsome face ghastly under the glassy lake-water. I wished now I had asked Philip how it happened; but, alas! I should learn soon enough.

We drove up to the Hermitage. I knew just how it would look, all alive with light. I was certain Mrs. Hatch would have supper on the table, with hot, strong coffee for uncle Jack. Yes, the door was open, and a red pathway of light led to it; and all the wide hall could be seen, with its old-fashioned oaken settle, its carved table, and rack of deer's antlers. Mrs. Hatch and one or two of the servants came out to the carriage; and the children were all safely placed on the doorstep, and ran in, followed by Mary Green.

"It is good to get home," said aunt Flossy. "I'll just tell you, now that we *are* safe, I've been haunted for days about this excursion. I

was glad enough to step on shore ; for only then the feeling left me."

She had been walking towards the door at the end of the hall that led into the dining-room, which ordinarily we used for a sitting-room. The table was a beautiful picture, full of rare old china, glass, and silver.

"How good the coffee will taste to Jack!" said Flossy, throwing her bonnet aside. "Hatch is always so thoughtful! I wonder if he—has come to his senses yet."

My eyes were burning, my throat was choking. She looked at me at last.

"For pity's sake eat something, Tony!" she said quickly. "You look like a ghost, child!" I was gazing towards the door. It opened, and there stood Phil, behind him Mr. Woodville: my heart almost stopped beating.

"What have you done with Jack?" she asked, going towards the table. "Can't you get him in here to take some coffee? That always so—helps him." She was going to say "sobers;" but the presence of Mr. Woodville restrained her.

"Why, how still you all are!" By this time she had a cup in one hand and the sugar-tongs in the other. I saw the cup go down, slowly, slowly, while she gazed from face to face, seeing terror in all.

"Phil, where's Jack?" she asked shortly; then, in a louder voice, —

"Philip, where is my husband?"

I had my arms about her now; but she wrenched herself away from me, and rushed toward the door.

"Stand aside, Philip," she said in a low, heart-broken voice. "You're keeping something from me. I want to go and see Jack."

Any thing sadder than that sight I never wish to see again; any thing more agonizing than that voice I never wish to hear.

"Flossy — dear aunt," said Philip appealingly, "Jack is not here. God knows we all suffer to say it — but Jack is not in the house at all."

"Where is he? Where is my Jack? Where is my husband?" Her voice rose to a shrill shriek, wild with despair.

"Tell her, Tony, if you can — I can't," said Philip chokingly.

"O Jack!" cried Flossy, lifting both arms over her head, her face as white as death. "He went overboard! he is drowned! Why didn't you tell me? And the last words I ever said to him" — unconsciousness happily came to her aid. But for Phil's arms, she would have fallen to the floor.

We carried her to her room. Mary Green was standing in the nursery-door, on the south side of the hall.

“Oh, what has happened?” she cried, following us up stairs. I told her—told her to be calm, with great sobs choking me.

“I’m glad the children are asleep,” she said, the tears running over her face. “Poor little things!”

Phil left the room, brought me up some coffee, and stood over me till I drank it.

“We are going down to the wharf,” he said. “We kept the phaeton standing. Perhaps we shall hear something. There are men out with grappling-irons, and it may be they have recovered the body by this time.”

Mrs Hatch came in, white and trembling. She had been helping Mary Green put the children to bed.

“O my ’eavenly Father!” she said in genuine distress. “It can’t be true! Which it is burnt feathers to her nose will bring her round, poor lady! It were a cousin of mine went out fishing, and were shot in the ’ead.” During this time she was pulling the feather duster to pieces, and burning and applying the feathers. “Which a ’orrible smell they makes, enough to bring the dead to life,” she added with a wry face. “And they brought ’im ’ome a corpse,—a beautiful corpse ’e was; and ’is wife—well, it brought on double trouble. It was twins, and they was both berried together: a respectabler funeral I

never saw. Why, Miss Hantonia, there was twenty mourning coaches — There! she's coming to. Feathers never fails!"

I remember wanting to ask her if it was the mother or the twins who died. But all my attention was needed now; for Flossy slowly opened her eyes, her heavy, lustreless eyes, and, seeing me, she caught both my hands.

"Tell me it was only a dream, Tony; tell me it isn't true — why don't you? You can't, you can't! My poor boy lies under the water! and the last words I ever said to him — O my God!"

She lay thus, moaning and shivering, and wringing her hands.

"They will say so many cruel things!" she murmured bitterly. "They will be glad — O Tony! if he would come back to me, I'd never murmur or complain again, no, not so much as open my lips. But no — it is death — cold, drowning death."

CHAPTER XXI.

TALKING WITH FATHER.

PAPA, who had come home in the phaeton with Philip, had been so unwell, so unnerved at the fearful ending of our excursion, that Philip insisted on his going directly to his room, and not seeing any one. As soon as I could leave Flossy for a few minutes, I went to learn how it fared with him. He had not gone to bed, but sat in the great chair by the window, his handkerchief thrown over his head. For some moments I stood there, hoping that he had heard me. Then a terrible fear overcame me. I shrieked his name, and fell on my knees.

"Why, my child!" he said softly, and put his dear old hand on my forehead. "What is it?"

"Oh! I feared you—you were so still!" I sobbed, not liking to put the horrible dread in words. "O papa! isn't it awful?"

"Yes, dear: I was living it all over. I can't realize it, it was all done so quickly."

"Papa, what will Flossy do? You are so dear to me! And what should I do without you?" I cried, still weeping.

He made me sit on his knee as if I had been a little child, and soothed me with sweet and tender words. Then he told me all he knew about it, — how they had uncle Jack as far out of sight as possible, away from the groups who sat or stood under the awnings; that at times, in the pitchy darkness, nothing could be seen out of the range of the ship-lights, and that the boat, not being often out so late, was very poorly provided with lanterns; that Phil and Harry walked back and forth, and, as Jack seemed asleep, they only assured themselves of his presence as they passed; that once, stopping a moment too long, uncle Jack used his opportunity, and they, little thinking what had happened, looked for him among the passengers; then every thing was done that could be done, and kept as quiet as possible, for Flossy's sake.

“Papa,” I said, “Harry Woodville has asked me to be his wife” (my face was hidden on his shoulder); “but,” and I raised myself to look in his face, “I will never marry any man who will not pledge his sacred honor never to touch either wine or spirits. Think if poor uncle Jack had done that in time! But no, he would drink, ‘like a gentleman,’ and this is the end, the miserable, disgraceful end.”

“I hope he may consent, my child, for your sake,” said papa; “but indeed it is asking much of a young man in his standing.”

"And what is he asking when *I* take that irrevocable pledge at the altar, for his sake? All a woman's life to be given into his keeping. Papa, you know what that is."

"Yes, my darling, I do. I pray God he may be worthy of the charge. And how is poor Flossy now? It would be cold comfort to tell the poor girl that her troubles are all over; and yet" —

"O papa! it isn't like you to talk so: it would be the one drop too much," I said. "You know how noble and sweet-tempered he was when himself, how brimming over with love for others, what manly qualities he had. I know of many a grand deed he has done, that uncle Orlo Standewort, with all his sounding charities, could not match."

"Had I better see poor Flossy?" asked papa.

"No, dear: I think it would rather increase her grief just now. When I left her, watched over by Mrs. Hatch and Mary Green, she was in a sort of stupor: so I came to you. Dear, dear uncle Jack! If I feel so utterly broken-hearted, what must she feel?"

"If you please, Miss Hantonia," said Mrs. Hatch, putting her head in at the door, "to keep 'er outer the winder from jumping in a perfect frenzy, or going hoff to the lake with nothing on 'er 'ead; an' Mary Green an' me

a 'anging on 'er neck is more than we are hable ;
an' so I came after you, which may 'ave more
hinfluence than hus." And I lost no time in
following the housekeeper.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED.

I FOUND Flossy in a high state of excitement, walking the floor.

“There’s no use, Tony: I can’t fight against it. I must go down there and look at the lake. I must, I must!”

I used every argument I could think of—in vain. She would go to the window, gaze out longingly, then turn to me with passionate entreaty. Luckily Philip came in; and though he had really no comfort to give her, yet he prevailed upon her to let him read some sweet passages out of that wonderful book that has balm and solace for all of God’s creatures, no matter what their extremity; and then we all knelt down, and his prayer lifted us on the wings of consolation, and brought to us the reality of Christ’s beautiful words,—

“Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

It was one of the saddest nights of my life; but, as I recall it, how can I say in the language of that same grand old book!—

"Sorrow endureth for a night; but joy cometh in the morning."

Early in the day, aunt Catherine's carriage stood before our gate. Aunt Kate and aunt Custis both came up the gravel-path, dressed in subdued colors, and with long veils. I had coaxed aunt Flossy down into the parlor while the work was being done. She saw her sisters, before the bell rang.

"Tell them I cannot see them now," she said faintly; but the servant had ushered them in almost as she spoke.

"My poor dear darling!" said aunt Catherine; and no doubt the pity in her voice was genuine, for Flossy had always been the favorite of the family,—"I have no words to tell you how sorry I am for you."

"Sorry! Are *you* sorry that poor Jack has gone?" And, releasing herself from her sister's embrace, she gave aunt Catherine a look, which, if I had been the wife of a thrice honored and even titled distiller, would have cut me to the heart.

"I am sorry for *you*, my dear," said Mrs. Standewort, a change in her voice. "We knew what poor Jack was once,—an ornament to society, and a pleasure to all who knew him. He came of a good family into a good family, and he had nobody to blame but himself—nobody."

Flossy, all this time, had walked, now forward, now back, her poor little hands trembling, her eyes glittering, her lips quivering. Now she stood still, and a strange light came into her face.

"Yes," she said softly, "he *had* somebody else to blame. Not but what it was very much his fault, the dear boy: but he was weak, not strong, like your husband; and the strong ought to protect the weak. When I see Orlo Standewort, and men of his same business, in the land to which my husband has gone, and where we are all going, I shall say to him, 'You, and men like you, are responsible for the ruined soul of my poor Jack!' Now mind, the day will come; and my words will be echoed by thousands of thousands. What do you suppose God will do with Orlo Standewort when that true charge is made against him?"

Aunt Kate had fallen back, pale and frowning, both hands raised.

"Why, you wicked girl! We came to sympathize with you, and to give you comfort, and you insult us."

Then aunt Flossy sank into a chair, and fell to weeping just like a little child; her sobs cutting one's very heart in two to hear. Aunt Geraldine was very much touched, and, though generally afraid of the Governor's wife, went

down on her knees, crying herself, and wound her arm about Flossy.

“Don’t say any thing harsh, Kate! she is our sister, and in great, terrible sorrow. — I loved Jack, dear,” turning to Flossy, “and I’m truly in grief for him. You know, sister Kate can’t help these things: I wouldn’t blame her. We’ve come here to say and do the very best we can, and, if there is any breach, to heal it.”

I had turned to the window to dry my eyes; for I knew, though aunt Geraldine’s words were not mere lip-service, that both women were, in the depths of their hearts, really glad that Flossy had parted company with one whom they considered disreputable.

Suddenly, though there was a haze in the atmosphere, I saw a carriage coming between the roses and lilies along the path. And there beside him was Harry’s face, all flushed, looking out; and there, pale, haggard, corpse-like if you will, but alive, alive! was uncle Jack himself!

“O Flossy!” I cried, — “Flossy! don’t faint, don’t lose your reason! Something is happening! Somebody is coming!” And then I think I must have ended in a succession of war-whoops, for the next thing I knew my arms were held down, Flossy was hanging round Jack’s neck, laughing strangely, all the children were shouting and crying, and aunt Kate and aunt Geral-

dine, quite aghast, were rubbing their eyes to see the wonderful sight.

"It *is* him! O Tony! it *is* Jack, my Jack! — O Jack! I'll never say a cross word to you again as long as I live, never, never!" And then she fell to sobbing.

Well, there was a room as full of happiness as it could well hold. Joy *had* come in the morning; and for a time nobody knew what he, she, or the next one, was doing. I only remember that aunt Kate looked disappointed; and I am afraid I heard her say, "They're all idiots!" But I might have dreamed it, for I seemed to myself only half awake. But I do know, that, when I sailed out into the hall with them, walking was too prosaic by half, and they and the oak chairs and tables, and stag's horns, all looked spirit-like. Aunt Kate said in a voice that sounded far away,—

"Well, this is the last time I shall come here! To think of that scoundrel making us all so wretched, and then to turn up alive, as such nuisances always do! And the worst of it is she encourages him! Very well, she has made her bed: let her lie on it. She will be sorry, yet, that he has come back again."

Sorry! Why, I never felt such unalloyed joy in all my life; even when, after drinking a cup of coffee, uncle Jack fell fainting in his chair,

and was carried up stairs ; even when, the next day, two doctors stood beside him, and aunt Flossy had only exchanged one dread for another ; even when, at almost the same hour, dear little Mabel was attacked with some mysterious illness, and there were silence and darkness and fear in the house. You who have lost those you loved in some sudden, unlooked-for moment, they leaving you with the smile and the love-words on their lips, or even the frown and the murmur, — *you* know what comfort your sore heart would have felt to be able to kiss the lips that were growing cold, ay, even to close the eyes whose last glance of living intelligence rested on you.

We had skilled nurses ; yet either Flossy or I were always in attendance at one bed or the other. Mary Green was invaluable : I did not blame Philip when he said, —

“ If I don’t keep out of her way, Tony, I shall fall in love with Flossy’s nurse.” I couldn’t have said no, pride or no pride ; for I had learned myself so to love and respect this child, who had fought her way up to the best and highest there is of respectability. She was so pure in mind, so gentle in spirit ; her touch was so quick and thorough ; every thing she did had in it the ring of genius ; and then, above all, she was as true as steel, and her pride as great

as that of the best of us. I found that out afterwards.

And Harry — how proud I was of him when he told me how he had found uncle Jack! It seems they kept up the search all night, with boats and lights. Twice the place where we had spent that glorious day was searched from one end to the other. Men were paid by the hour, and paid lavishly.

“It was one of the most picturesque scenes I ever witnessed,” said Harry, “as well as the saddest. The boats were stuck all over with lighted torches, and men with lamps fastened to their hats could be seen in every little dory; while the lake appeared in spots to be on fire. Once they fished out something heavy; but it proved to be a log when the boats had all gathered at the shout of ‘Found, found!’

“I was in a boat with three men, paying them ten dollars an hour, and five hundred promised by your brother, if they found the body. Suddenly we came in sight of that little island we had passed. If you remember, it was some distance off to the right, and there were patches of red, that looked like the flowers of the cactus, growing at its base.

“‘There’s no harm in going there, men,’ I said; but they thought it was a foolish idea. They were tired, and wanted to go home.

“You see, they had given up all hope of finding the body that night: in fact, it was quite near morning. I hailed a man in a little skiff, and I offered him twenty dollars to row me to the place.

“‘Well, mister,’ he said, ‘I’ll do it for the money. But you’ll find it a pesky place to land on. The ground is mashy, and not alleys safe. But I’m wide awake, and can pull you there in twenty minutes. That’s a dollar a minute, — pretty good pay.’

“‘All right! If I find him there, I’ll double it,’ I said; and so we put for the place. It was ‘mashy,’ as the fellow termed it, and disagreeable at that time in the morning; but I provided myself with a good light, and went stumbling among the stones. I had gone half over the place, and had almost made up my mind that it was a waste of time to search any longer, when, in a half-exposed patch of black earth (the grass was growing very scantily there), I saw a footprint. I don’t believe Robinson Crusoe on the rampage for his man Friday felt half the enthusiasm I did when I saw that sign that a human being had been there. To be sure, it might have been the mark of some one who had been over the ground to search; but something told me I was right in my first supposition that it was Jack, or, I should say, Mr. Meigs. You see, I am falling into the ways of the family.”

The dear fellow ! I hardly dared to whisper to myself how dear he was to me — not yet.

“ So I followed what looked like a trail ; and in a very short time I came upon him, lying quite senseless, at first I thought dead. At the signal agreed upon, my boatman came ; and together we carried your uncle, and laid him in the bottom of the little skiff. Well, you should have seen the commotion as we went. As fast as the news was spread, the men cheered, and followed in our wake. It was quite a triumphal procession, — torches all along the line, shouts upon shouts, and the people at the landing running hither and thither. It was thought best at first to take him where he could have medical treatment ; and I staid by him till morning.”

“ How good and kind you have been ! ” I murmured, tears blinding my eyes.

“ Oh, nonsense ! who wouldn't ? ”

“ But the queerest thing about the whole business is, that your uncle does not remember any thing about it. He is a grand swimmer, I am told ; and the shock of the fall must have restored him to partial consciousness. He could tell me nothing of his experience or sensations : it is all a blank to him. But he was hurt either by his plunge into the lake, or by some fall. The doctor, as you know, finds evidence of some internal injury.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

WILL'S LITTLE STORY.

UNCLE ORLO STANDEWORT went on his haughty way, and took no notice of us. We heard of splendid parties, archery, lawn-tennis, excursions ; but none of us were invited. The papers spoke of the new Governor as an exceptionally brilliant man, and gave lists of his superb charities, his rare qualities, his wealth, his wife's diamonds, but never spoke of his distilleries, hotel-bars, or sample rooms. All that was kept in the background, though it was known to be the source from which he derived his immense income. Once or twice a week a message was sent to the Hermitage, inquiring for the health of the inmates ; and occasionally aunt Geraldine would steal down of a morning, shrouded in a veil, and meet aunt Flossy in a sisterly way.

After one of these visits, Flossy came down stairs where Mary Green and I were sitting, little Mabel in my arms. .

"It is the first time he has slept in a week,"

she said, alluding to uncle Jack ; and, after looking at the sweet little face resting on my bosom, she sank back in her chair with a sigh.

“How changed the house seems !” she said softly. “We never had sickness before. Father died, you know, just after he had come from business ; and it seems so strange !”

“What does the doctor think of Jack ?” I asked.

“He don’t say much, and I am too great a coward to ask him. I see enough myself to understand that his case is very critical ; but, thank God ! if he dies now, he dies a sober man. I shall have that fact for a consolation all my life. But that other—it was too terrible ! I could not have borne it.” And she hid her face in her hands.

The child Mabel stirred, and Flossy lifted her in her arms. The little one was very light ; though she had not wasted away perceptibly.

“Tony,” said Flossy, “I have strange thoughts about Jack and this child. Their life and their love seem so interfused and intertwined, that, if Jack dies, she will die too.” Again she hid her face, this time in the child’s golden hair, and I could see her throat throb with emotion. Presently she looked up, her bright dark eyes brighter with tears.

“And we were planning for a birthday party

next week," she said, — "Mabel's fifth birthday. My beautiful darling! Will it be spent in heaven, I wonder?"

"Which 'eaven may be a very nicish sort of place," said Mrs. Hatch, catching Flossy's last words (she had brought in some refreshments I had ordered). "Leastways it's allowed to be. I've never been there, an' it's my hopinion that God put us 'ere to stay till the grass'opper is a burthen, — an' I've often thought what a burthen the cockroach always is, — or 'Ed made hangels of us in the fust place, which 'E 'avn't. Chirk up, Miss Meigs, there's barrels of flour waitin, and chunks of beef beyond countin', for both on 'em. Don't you go to gittin' down-'arted, like a cousin of my hown who got her mourn-in' veil ready three times, an' was the fust one in her shroud. Beautiful she looked, though skin and bone through fretting on troubles that never come to pass, as might 'ave enjoyed 'erself, if she 'ad knowed 'ow it were agoing to turn out!"

Mrs. Hatch was a good comforter, and her queer stories always set Flossy to laughing, no matter what mood she was in. I took occasion then to ask her about something over which I had puzzled for some time.

"Don't you remember, Mrs. Hatch, that night aunt Flossy fainted away, you told us

about another cousin of yours who went out fishing, and was shot?"

"Did I? Well, to be sure I did. Shot it was — dead!" And she shook her head mournfully.

"And they brought 'im 'ome to 'is wife a corpse.

"An' a fine 'oman she was, poor soul! She married a Mr. McKim, a Scotchman, and as pretty a lecturer as ever you heard, in one year after."

"Oh! Then it was the twins who died."

"The twins! Goodness save us! what twins?" And she turned a perplexed face towards me.

"Why, his being brought in that way hurried their birth, you said, and they died, and were buried with him."

"Oh, sakes! That must 'ave been another cousin," she hastened to answer.

"Then did you have two of your cousins shot?" I asked incredulously.

"Two! A whole batch of 'em, Miss Hanton! They was that imprudent an' fearless, that scarcely a one of 'em died in their beds."

"How many cousins had you, Mrs. Hatch?" asked Flossy demurely.

"For that matter, nigh on forty, — boys an' girls," said Mrs. Hatch, with a calm, undaunted visage. "There was twelve of us in my own

mother's family, not counting step-children on both sides."

"Oh!" said Flossy. "That accounts for it."

If Mrs. Hatch was crestfallen, she did not show it. True to her English blood, she brazened it out; and her fictitious cousins and aunts continued to adorn the gallery of her imagination, and to afford us unending amusement.

It had been raining; but now the sun came out, and I hastened to open the doors into the garden. Every flower, grass-blade, and pebble shone as if fresh from the Hand that created it. A veil of crumpled mist hung, as by some enchantment, over the whole radiant vista, through which the fountains shimmered, their silvery jets falling on the leaves and the glistening marble, with low, murmurous music.

Flossy carried Mabel to the door, and tried to coax her languid vision. The child smiled at sight of all this beauty, and held out her feeble little hand.

"I know heaven must be passing lovely, if this old earth is but its distorted semblance," said Flossy, as her eyes sought mine. "But I want to keep my baby. What do you think? Is God going to take her from me?"

"No, indeed!" I tried to say cheerfully. "He is quite willing she should live her allotted time; and I hope to see her grow up into a

pretty young lady, like the one who is coming."

It was little Hildegarde, in her rose-pink ribbons, and white, much-ruffled dress. She only came to "snatch a kiss from us," she said, holding up her lovely little rosebud of a mouth, making Mabel laugh with languid delight as she placed in the child's hand a Dresden china doll, that, drolly enough, suggested a miniature presentment of herself. Then she ran away.

Philip and cousin Will came in, clamorous for luncheon.

"We have brought somebody else," said Philip, as I shook hands with Will. "And here he is."

The bishop!

I am afraid I almost ran into his arms.

"I am so glad to see you!" I kept repeating, — "so glad!" and I knew that my cheeks were crimson: the surprise startled me into blushing. Lunch was ready, — some of Mother Anna's "frickashoed" chicken, sponge-cake, strawberries and tea, with rich cream. Will sat at my right hand. He was excited, and at something pleasant: I saw that.

"What is it?" I asked.

He took a bite of biscuit to fortify himself, swallowed some tea, and then beamed upon me.

"She is mine."

"O Will! that's what made the little minx so demure, so oddly dignified," I said.

"What little minx?"

"Yours, — Hildegarde. She called in here a little while ago."

"Did she?" and his face was quite heavenly.

"You are happy, then?"

"Supremely so."

"But — you are both so young!"

"I know — but we can wait. She just dotes on me, you bet! Excuse the slang."

"And you?"

"Worship the ground," etc.

"I shall love her dearly; as good as she is pretty, I know."

"Yes, and witty — and sings like an angel — and — got two gold medals for scholarship. Brains there — brains! Saw her father. He called us two young fools, — got mad on the spot: thought he was going for pistols, — but laughed afterwards, and said he was married himself at nineteen. Got a grandmother and great-grandmother, and I don't know how *many* grandmothers behind that. First grandmother not much older looking than — you are: well, I mean fresh, charming, golden hair, and rosy cheeks. And the other, Hilda's great-great-grandmother, is a dear bright little thing in caps, with cheeks like a peach. Never saw

such a family in my life, — grow handsomer as they grow older, and younger too; order of things reversed.”

“And they are wealthy, I suppose?”

“Wealthy! What would you think of a plantation six miles across, and five hundred slaves?”

“But, Will, you are talking nonsense. There are no slaves now.”

“Well, that’s what he used to have; and it’s a big thing to tell about, and he isn’t slow to tell, either. I’ve done about half my courting on that plantation, with the darkies all hoeing about me, and cabins and cows, and hens and hospitals, all mixed up. I suppose I answered in the right place; but, for the life of me, I couldn’t have told what I was saying.”

“Then, he has lost every thing.”

“Lost! No. He is the luckiest man under heaven. Found a gold-mine on his place in Virginia, and sold out for a small fortune. Then his son went to California, and struck quicksilver, and he and his father went shares. And now he is a millionaire, — the father of my little Hildegarde.” He crossed his hands over his heart, and looked unutterable things, under pretence of finding his napkin.

“Didn’t I tell you?” I asked as well as I could for laughing.

"Oh, but! — cousin Tony, you *were* adorable; and a good deal of it was owing to your name," he added with admirable *naïveté*. "It was so comrade-like to call you Tony; and you were, if you'll pardon, so very like a boy in your tastes."

I laughed aloud. The bishop and Phil, who had been talking earnestly upon church-matters, both looked over at us, smiling and curious.

"I was telling Tony about aunt Kate's garden-party," said Will, unmoved. "Well, I was just going to," he added *sotto voce* as I checked him with a look. "Gardy and I — who do I mean by Gardy? why, Hildegarde, of course — were there. She wore the most delightful little blue gown — and O Tony! she is" —

"But the party," said I.

"Yes, sure enough! You don't know what you lose, Tony. I'm mighty sorry for you (they say mighty every thing — the Tracys); for there wasn't a handsomer girl there."

"In spite of my looking like a grandmother," I said demurely.

"Oh, cut that, please! — a fellow isn't always responsible for his words. And I say, aunt Kate is a female ogre, for treating you so. And, do you know, I think she is disappointed because uncle Jack didn't drown? Well, there was style there, I tell you! And uncle Orlo gave out the

prizes: there were three,—for first, second, and third best shot. He is a prime favorite, is the Governor. You should see the young girls cluster about him!—the glamour of position, you know. He has every thing that heart can wish, even the worship of sweet sixteen. I'll wager aunt Kate will be jealous more than once during his reign."

"What were the prizes?"

"Oh! one was a bracelet with the most perfect charm attached,—gold bow, and arrows tipped with diamonds; the other, a fancy whip mounted with silver; and the third—let me see. By the way, Gardy got the third. Ah! I remember, a locket with some sort of sporting attachment. She would have got the first, I'm sure, but that the sun was in her eyes."

"And you are not through college yet. I'm afraid it will spoil you."

"No: it will keep me sweet and whole as a nut. I'll tell you why. When the other fellows are off after wild oats and things, I shall be snug in my room (barring a constitutional now and then), writing letters to my little darling—when I am not reading hers. Why, Tony, you don't know how much mischief even you have kept me from!"

"Even me!" If it was the least bit humbling to find myself subordinated to an "even me," I

was very thankful for the shield his fancy for me had been to his unguarded boyhood. No doubt he had done his quota of mischief—all boys will; but I think my cousin was free from the low, petty vices in which even young men of the best pretensions sometimes indulge.

The bishop made preparations to leave immediately after luncheon. I was disappointed, yet I could hardly have told why. He did not speak of his nephew Harry, who, by the way, had taken a run to New York, on business for uncle Jack; and I did not think it likely that Philip had mentioned him, he was so immersed in church business, conventions, convocations. He went up stairs to see uncle Jack, and, when he came down, took leave of me. There was a warmth in the pressure of his hand, a look in his eye, as he bade me farewell, that would, not long before, have sent my thoughts wool-gathering; but, beyond causing me a slight surprise at the time, they did not occur to me again.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A LITTLE BRANDY.

“**H**AS ever yo’ see such a chile as my chile, afo’, Miss Antony?” Mother Anna persisted in changing one historic name for another.

“You mean the bishop?” I said.

“Deed does I! Dar ain’t nobody on dis yer planitarium like him. I knows! I wor just twenty year ole dat day he wor born, an’ I helped him up to de emerance whar he stans to-day. I taughted him his Commandermments from Genesis to Travellations. You nebber see a sweeter chile,—like he wor all honey inside, an’ it struck out all ober him. Straight!—but he wor straight as an arrer, wid long curls an’ blue eyes, an’ cuttin’ ’e teeth like a angel an’ a cherubeam confined. And he’s kept his hebenly lucidations in his dispersition up to dis day, honey. Dar ain’t a more chile-like an’ luminous character outside de gospil. He’s nighest de Sabior ob de worl, Miss Antony, dan any man I knows—libin’ or dead.”

Dear old woman ! She told me how she put her arms round him, and how he bent his stately head to receive her kiss of welcome.

“He’s like a son to me, an’ I’s like a mudder to him,” she added ; “an’ it’s de lationship ob love.” I watched her moving along the hall to the rooms which his thoughtful kindness had provided for her.

“May I go too ?” I asked.

“Bless yo’ heart ! yes. I shall be mighty pleased to welcome de bishop’s lady — ’deed I shall.”

“But I am not the bishop’s lady, and never shall be,” I said, following, not quite relishing the shrill laughter that cut like a knife. Her answer was that chuckle, native only to the throat of an African ; and the next moment I was in her room. Such a room ! — tables and chairs of centuries ago, a carved cradle large enough for an adult, a mighty bedstead heaped with feather-beds, old candelabras yellow with age, a clock that would be the envy of a relic-gatherer, curtains white as snow, rugs made at home by the hearth-side, and I know not how many curiosities of domestic contrivances.

“My chile, jes let me choose an’ pick from ole missus’ tings,” said the woman. “Dar’s de cradle *he* wor rocked in, brought ober from de Ole Country ; an’ dar’s de clock come wid it.

Dem's de rugs made a hundred yars ago, an' dey're solemn to me case ob de feets as has touched 'em now gone up de golden stars." So she went on, giving me a history of this relic and the other, till the day was far spent, and somebody came up to say that Mr. Woodville was down stairs.

How blithely I went down to meet my beloved, never dreaming how closely bliss and sorrow touch each other ! We met as if all were understood between us, though I had not yet given him his answer.

It was his pleasure to stand while he insisted on my seating myself ; and so he listened to all that had been going on for the past few days.

As he stood by the low mantel, looking down upon me, I thought with pride how superior he was to all the young men I had ever known. It did not just strike me that the lustre of his eye was unnatural, or that his laugh was harsher and less controlled than usual. Presently he stooped low to my ear to whisper something. I scarcely heard, I scarcely heeded. A new terror made my veins run cold. I sat there speaking scarcely a word : my very face must have changed through the keen agony that had seized upon my heart. Fortunately, Mary Green came in with a message from Flossy : so, excusing myself, I ran up stairs, burdened and wretched, and scarcely caring to live.

Flossy sat near uncle Jack, who, white and weak, was bolstered up in bed, looking handsomer than ever.

"Tony, Jack won't touch any thing I give him to-day," said Flossy, laughing. "He says, if you will make him a glass of lemonade, he can drink it. He is exceedingly complimentary. But what can I do? The poor fellow must have something to drink."

"Come here, Tony," said Jack.

I went to the bed : he took my hand.

"Stoop down."

I bent my ear towards his lips.

"For God's sake, Tony, put a little brandy in it."

"O uncle Jack ! how can you use His name ?" I said, grieved and miserable.

"You are all against me : you don't know what I suffer," he said piteously. "The doctor said I might."

"You must excuse me, dear uncle Jack — I can't — I should feel like a murderer. Much as I love you, you must not ask that of me : indeed you must not !"

"O Jack !" said Flossy. "She don't mean to be unkind ; but it has almost wrought your ruin. And though the doctor did say you could have it, — and doctors have much to answer for, — he also said that any other harmless stimulant would do just as well."

"I don't want it: I shall die of this thirst," he moaned.

"You can do as you please, aunt Flossy," I said: "I can not and will not."

"Go down, Tony, there is the dinner-bell," said Flossy; and I gladly left the room.

Harry sat with us at table, but he ate very little. He had taken a late lunch, he said; but he talked and laughed, and was so altogether unlike himself, that I caught Philip more than once looking at him with surprise, and at me with concern. At last, dessert was served, and we adjourned to the parlor. Philip had an engagement, and left early. If only I could have gone with him! I followed him into the hall, with some excuse. His eye met mine.

"I am sorry," he said.

I could not even look up: shame weighed my eyelids down.

"He has been drinking."

"Yes," I said chokingly. "He will never come here after to-night."

"Oh, don't be too hard on him!"

"Philip, do you apologize for drunkenness?" I asked.

"But, my dear sister, it is very far from that."

"It is so near," was my reply, "that it will part us."

He went out into the dark. I stood in the

doorway a moment to cool my face, which seemed in a fever. I looked up to the great heavens burning with stars. I said to myself and them, "Never! never! even if it breaks my heart." Then I shut the door, and returned to my Harry, fortified. He could not but notice my altered demeanor. I spoke coldly and in monosyllables. I could not smile, I could not talk.

"Dear, are you not well?" at last he asked me anxiously.

I looked up at him: my resolution almost gave way at sight of those pleading eyes. I made some answer wide of the mark, but which seemed to satisfy him; and he continued to talk, and gave me an outline of his travels, as he called his visit to New York. At last his voice grew softer. The effect of the powerful drink he had taken, whatever it was, seemed wearing off. He began to talk of other things. Dearer, sweeter words found their way to my ear, to my heart.

"I am going to have my answer to-night," he said later: "I came expressly to know my fate."

"How could you come for such a purpose in the state you were in?" I asked, excitement lending a sharper tone to my voice.

"In the state I was in?" he repeated, flushing, and looking down uneasily.

"It is hard for me to say what I must; to seem a severe, strong-minded 'fanatic,' if you will. Yes, if what I demand be fanaticism, then I stand charged with the fact. Harry, you had been drinking when you came here. Listen," for I dared not stop, though he was going to speak.

"I can give you my answer in a few words. If you will promise on the honor of a gentleman, and in writing, never to touch any kind of spirit again, as long as you live, I will be your wife: not unless."

"Why, that is tantamount to signing a pledge," he said gravely.

"It is signing a pledge that I require, before I give my happiness in your keeping."

He stood up quite straight. I also stood up, and we two looked at each other as though taking an eternal farewell.

"Miss Antonia," he said in the same grave, quiet manner, "I cannot give you that pledge; but I will explain to you why I was more excited than usual, if you will listen."

"I do not wish to listen," was my reply.

"Then, as you are stubborn and fanatical where I thought you sweet and womanly, you force me to say good-by."

"Good-by," I said, holding out my hand.
"We may part friends."

"No!" he said sternly. "Never friends, or any thing to each other, as long as we live."

"Very well, you have chosen it," I said, keeping my voice steady with a great effort.

"No, you have ordered it. You choose to put a slight upon my manhood, to degrade me to a level with fallen men, to reduce me to servility. No woman shall do that, not even were she an angel from heaven! I am too jealous of my own integrity. Miss Antonia, I have loved you," — his voice broke there, strong man that he was, — "I do love you. I cannot lightly shake off an attachment which made you seem to me the one woman in all the world; but I am not one of the kind who die for love, I think. And you" — All this time he was holding my hand in a fierce grasp, and now he compelled my glance; but his eyes, always so beautiful, looked like globes of fire.

"Harry," I said, and some pitying angel must have aided me in controlling my tones, my tears, "I love you dearly. I doubt if I shall ever love any other man. But I also can lay down the sceptre broken between us. I shall not die, God helping me, but live to care for others not as fortunate as myself."

"Yes, I understand," he said, still keeping my hand. "You will become an advocate, a singer, a speaker upon some temperance plat-

form ; you will go down amidst the miserable dregs of an outcast humanity."

I shook his hand off, and retreated a few steps.

"I shall do whatever God gives me the power to do," I said proudly ; "and, if my work is worthily done, I shall always remember it was through your resolve that I was permitted to succeed. Go now, please : I cannot bear this any longer."

"Come with me," he said pleadingly : "be my wife ; come, Antonia !"

He held out both arms.

"On one condition," was my reply.

He drew a long breath, moved back slowly, and left the room without another word.

And I was alone with my anguish.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BISHOP'S LETTER.

IT was well for me, that, for many days after this trial, my energies were taxed to the utmost. My father's health was very precarious. Much of the time, though complaining but little, he kept his room. Mabel grew weaker and weaker, and uncle Jack did not seem to rally. It was a very dark outlook at the Hermitage just then. Aunt Flossy's anxiety and excitement kept her up; but the hectic on her cheeks, and the hot, dry touch of her hand, made me tremble for the time when all this fictitious strength should give way.

Phil told me that Mr. Woodville had left Saratoga, and had given no clew to his whereabouts. I heard nothing from him, though I remonstrated with myself for building upon the hope that I might by telegraph or letter learn where he was. It was very hard to feel that I had lost him forever, through what even aunt Flossy, at first, called a mere whim.

"I don't believe there was any danger for him,

dear," she would say. "He wasn't the kind of man to throw himself away, — not one of the yielding kind."

"To yield once was to lose me," I said. "No: the bishop has taught me what true manhood is. Harry is not so great a man as his uncle. But then it is all over: let us not talk about it."

"You ought to marry the bishop," she said, smiling.

"Wait till he asks me," was my reply.

"Would you? Would you, if he asked you?" she cried eagerly.

"What a question, aunt Flossy!" I answered, troubled almost to tears. "A woman might be proud only to merit his esteem. And I don't think the bishop will ever marry: he is wedded to his church."

Strangely enough, some two weeks afterward I received a letter dated from New York, and which read as follows:—

"MY DEAR MISS IRWIN,—Circumstances have detained me in this city beyond my proposed visit, or I might have run over to Saratoga before this, and peeped in at the Hermitage. It is a dear old resting-place; and I have often pictured it as a retreat when I become an old man, and lay aside my staff of active service. I hope, however, that may be many a year away; and perhaps I may be privileged to work hand in hand with your good brother as long as my life is spared."

"I have a question to ask you, over which I have thought much since I last saw you; and as I am a plain man, not given to romancing in matters of any import, I shall trust to your kindness in forgiving my boldness in thus addressing you. From the first day I met you, you have seemed to me something more than a daughter, and dearer than a friend. Could you overlook the disparity of age between us, and become my wife? I offer you an honest, free heart, a position which will have its difficulties, — for I must be much away from home, — and a love which I feel is pure and self-sacrificing. Do not hesitate to use language in your reply as plain as my own. I am quite prepared for a refusal, though your free consent would sweeten and beautify my life."

And so the letter went on to the close; and I read it with admiration, respect, and cheeks that tingled. My vanity, if I had any, was flattered at the preference of so upright and distinguished a man. If only it had come a few, very few months before, how easily and readily I could have answered it! Then I had seen no one who had the power to divide my thoughts, and, safe in the shelter of his keeping, no one could have had that power. I sat and pondered the matter over. Harry was lost to me, and I had wept and mourned enough over the loss. Now I was trying resolutely to put him out of my mind, and, if possible, my heart. To do this required all the powers I possessed of self-repression, and much active co-operation in the tasks that were ready to my hand. I helped Mrs. Hatch; shared

with Mary Green and the nurse in the care of little Mabel, who had been steadily growing worse; had attended to all purchases, going to market myself; had written out several papers from Philip's dictation: in fine I had not one idle moment from the time I rose till I went, fatigued and sleepy, to bed, only to go over the same round on the day following. In this way I succeeded in blunting the edge of my sorrow, and found some solace in the gratitude of all around me. My father still kept his room; and a part of the morning I read prayers, a chapter in the Bible, and the newspaper to him. Aunt Geraldine came often to the Hermitage. She was very fond of papa, and lightened my cares somewhat by sitting with him, and chatting of the past, to which he now almost constantly referred.

"I don't know as any thing keeps me here," he said one day, "except the dread of leaving you alone in the world. If I could only see you the wife of some good man!"

"But dearest papa," I said, "you know I have demonstrated the fact that I can take care of myself—though you are not going to die these many years yet." But, even as I spoke, my heart failed me; for I knew how much I depended upon having somebody by to pet and make much of, and he looked so sick and worn,

and near to the end, though he had looked so before, and recovered.

My heart turned to the bishop's offer. I confess it, though it may make me seem volatile and capricious; but it was such a horror to me to look forward to an utterly lonely life! Here was a good, noble gentleman, handsome, even imposing in presence, superior in attainments and position. One word of mine, and I should stand on a pinnacle far higher than that on which fortune had placed my aunt Kate; for it would be established, whereas hers was only ephemeral. I concluded at last, after a long talk with papa, who was my only confidant, to write to the bishop frankly, telling him all that was in my heart, and under what conditions, if he would accept them, I would become his wife.

Philip shortly after gave me a little item cut from one of the New-York dailies, in which Harry Woodville was spoken of as an enterprising young townsman who was engaged in setting on foot a railroad connection which would take him out of the country for a term of years, and that he had promised letters from Peru, which the editor announced would be, owing to the brilliant talents, high connections, etc., of the young gentleman, the most enjoyable of the season, and add greatly to the receipts of the journal. That decided me. I stifled my

regrets, and called pride to my aid : they should never say that I was a lovelorn maiden, never. So I wrote the bishop, sent the letter, and went about my duties, for a day or two, in a purely mechanical way.

As much time as I could spare I spent with Flossy. We were more like two sisters than aunt and niece, and very confidential on most subjects. I had merely told her that Harry and I had come to an understanding ; that we had mutually separated, and all was at an end between us as to an engagement. That we were not even to be friends I did not care to tell her : indeed, all matters outside the sick-chamber interested her but little. Jack's illness assumed a new and more violent character. He was very subdued, very penitent, poor fellow ! He had scarcely ever before known a day's illness in his life ; and to lie there helpless (a man of his splendid physique), a victim of his own wicked self-indulgence, was very trying to his better nature. He scarcely ever sat up now. His bed was drawn opposite a large double window that commanded a pretty view ; and beside it, on a narrow, long table, were placed whatever he wished, or needed to use. Aunt Kate was forever sending jellies and nice things from her own table ; but she never came to see him, and but occasionally to visit papa.

I shall not soon forget the last day that we were forbidden to hope for the little child's life.

It was a golden day. The perfumed breeze moved the silken drapery above the window; and the sun, tempered by the deep canvas awning, gave a cool, rich glow to the room, brightening the colors of the silken embroidery of a large Japanese screen near the foot of the bed. The doctor, — I watched his face keenly, and thought I detected a change of countenance as he listened to uncle Jack's experience of the previous night, — as he went out, beckoned to aunt Flossy; and she, pressing my hand almost convulsively, followed him into the wide, cool upper entry.

When she came back, her face was very white; but she busied herself with moving, an inch or so, some bouquets that stood in slender vases on the window-seat. I was all nerves. A shadow had fallen upon me darker than any I had yet experienced. I looked at uncle Jack. His eyes were closed, and the blue veins showed clearly over the beautifully defined lids. Back from a broad brow, now delicately white, rippled the golden brown hair, which had grown luxuriantly during his illness; and his broad chest, and massive, well-turned throat, — almost like that of a woman, and slightly curved as his face lay a little away from the light, — im-

pressed me with an idea of perfect manly strength and beauty. Presently, by an almost imperceptible sign, Flossy signified that she wanted me.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JACK'S PROMISE.

I FOLLOWED her, not disturbing Jack, — who was in one of his “cat-naps,” as he called them, — to a little room over the hall, which Philip used as his study. The walls were covered with books to the ceiling.

Flossy stood leaning on the morocco-covered table in the centre of the room. Her face dropped on my shoulder, and I supported her with one arm.

When she could speak, she looked up, all trembling.

“Tony,” she said, “the doctor says there is no hope for my baby.”

“Oh, I thought perhaps it was uncle Jack!” I said, drawing a long breath. “I could not think of death in connection with him.”

“My baby, my sweet little Mabel! She was always an angel,” sobbed Flossy. “I never knew how dear she was till this dread day.”

“Well, Flossy, God’s will be done. Can’t you say that?”

"How can I, Tony? You speak to a mother whose very heart is bleeding. Tony, you don't know any thing about it."

That was true. I kept silence.

"And, Tony, she may go to-day — any time. And Jack — he must know it. I asked the doctor what I should do."

"‘Whatever he wishes, Mrs. Meigs; short of moving him: he must not be moved,’ was his answer. How shall I tell him, Tony? I cannot: it is impossible! Even he shrank from it. Have you seen her to-day? She looks like one in heaven already."

"Do you want me to tell him, Flossy?"

"Oh! will you? You are such a brave, strong creature! — so different from me! I am going down now to my darling. In a little while I will come up again."

As I went into the sick-chamber, sad enough, and my heart sinking, Jack opened his eyes, and smiled weakly. I went to his side, and asked him if he wanted any thing.

"Yes," he said, clasping my hand.

"What is it?"

"To get well," with a look so yearning, that it checked my feeble desire to communicate what I knew I must.

"Jack," I said, "I have something to tell you; and it is very hard for me."

"Where is Flossy?" he asked eagerly, his eyes roving round the room.

"She is out now — down stairs with Mabel."

"My baby-girl!" he cried with dilated eyes — "she is not dead!"

"No, Jack dear — but — they think it is just possible she may not live;" and my tears dropped on his hand.

"I must get up. I must go and see," he said with a wail in his weak voice.

"No, Jack: that is forbidden. It would endanger your life, perhaps."

"My life!" he said with a look not easily to be forgotten. "What do I care for my life? I would die to save her! She shall not die!"

"But you must be quiet, Jack," I said as he struggled to rise. The effort was too much for him. He fell back, half fainting.

"Tony, I must see my child, I *must* see her! Tell them to bring her to me."

The door opened. First came Mary Green with a small child's pillow, then Flossy, bearing on her outstretched arms a beautiful effigy, a waxen form, a lovely image, whose down-streaming flaxen locks, and white, nerveless hands, would have struck a pang to the stoutest heart. Slowly she bore her towards the bed, followed by Mrs. Hatch, who was somewhat officiously wiping her eyes on her ample apron.

"Oh, my baby!" murmured Jack, his lips quivering. "Lay her there;" and he stretched out his left arm. The little pillow was adjusted; and the child, quite unconscious, and beautiful with the sweet solemnity of coming death, lay close to his heart.

"Oh, my little wee one!" murmured Jack, "they say you are going to die. Well, maybe the good Father will let us both go together."

"Jack! I cannot bear that," said Flossy, breaking down. He turned his face aside. Great tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"God knows I've never made you very happy, dear; and this sweet angel!—what kind of a father have I been to her?"

"Jack, you are every thing to me," sobbed Flossy.

"Well, it's all over, Flossy. I've been a bad husband. I never raised my hand to you; but I've been a bad husband, and—and father. Oh, my blessed little Mabel! my one girl-flower! papa will never touch that dreadful drink again. No, I swear, as God is my witness, with this dying angel beside me, I will never taste, touch, nor handle it, so help me God!"

There was not a dry eye in the room: how could there be? To see him turn to the little one, and tell her what he would be to her if Heaven would spare her to him, to see him draw

her closer and closer till his almost failing arms encircled her, and she lay quite over his heart—I could not bear it, but made my way out of the room as well as I could, blinded as I was by tears.

I ran down stairs. There were letters in the box; one from the dear bishop, which said,—

“Your beautiful message came to me. A thousand thanks, my dear child. These lines will reach you in the morning. I shall be with you in the early evening.”

What a day it was! Only that papa had rallied, and seemed on the mending hand, I could not have staid in the house. Philip was gone away, and was not expected back till night. I spent my time in the hall, waiting for messages from Jack and Mabel. I longed for, yet dreaded, the bishop’s visit.

From hour to hour there was scarcely a change. Mabel was much the same, lying over her father’s heart; and so it went till dinner-time. There was nobody at the table but Mary Green and myself.

After dinner I walked the floor in a state of nervous tremor. I knew the instant *his* step touched the gravelled path.

“What will he do?” I said to myself. “Will he open his arms for me? will he kiss me?”

I was prepared for some little demonstration.

He came in with just the same demeanor as usual, took my hand, pressed it to his lips, and with his courtly manner led me to a seat. There, still looking at me sweetly and gravely, he placed a paper in my hand, which he asked me to open and read.

I did so. The words swam before my eyes, but I read the missive twice.

"I Harry Woodville, in this the solemn hour of midnight, pledge myself, before God and unseen witnesses, never to touch a drop of intoxicating fluid of any kind during the remainder of my natural life. And may God help me to the end!"

I held the paper in both hands, close to my heart.

"Does that satisfy you?" asked the kind, gentle voice.

"Oh, it does, fully!" I said, half sobbing.

"And are you happy?"

I looked up in his noble face. He was smiling down upon me, not a trace of any selfish desire or pain to be discerned.

"Speak out, my child: you are only my child now," he said softly.

"I am — yes, very happy, if he — Harry is not changed."

"Only for the better, as that document testifies," was his answer. "You heard of his pro-

jected visit to Peru. Two nights ago his friends tendered him a reception. Overpowered by their kindness, their solicitations, he left them towards morning, for the first time in his life drunk. You can guess with what a sense of dishonor he awakened late on the following day to find himself watched by a friend. Of that day I need not tell. Suffice it to say, that at midnight, under the influence of that friend and his own enlightened judgment, he wrote the paper you hold in your hands. And now he is here, waiting to seal his repentance and his love. Shall I call him in?"

"How can I thank you?" I said with trembling lips. "*You* were the friend who stood by my Harry — *my* Harry!"

"Yes" — and stooping he just touched my forehead with his blessed lips; and then — But here I end the chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SAVED !

“**A**STONISHING!” said the doctor, when, on his arrival next morning, he found his little patient still alive, and yet lying on her father’s bosom. He looked closer. Tiny drops of moisture beaded all the happy face.

“That is well,” he said : “that looks hopeful.”

It was hopeful. Some vital power in the heart on which she rested, or uncle Jack’s great love, or God’s answer to his impassioned prayers, had worked almost a miracle. Mabel began slowly to recover. And uncle Jack, in watching and tending her, found his lost manhood, and recovered his shattered health. Great was our joy, when, within a week, the little one, lying on Jack’s knee (he seated in his sick-room chair), began to notice objects, and smile at us as we bent to court her recognition. And later, a happier family party never gathered together than when we had helped uncle Jack down stairs, Mabel still in his arms, and all sat in the lovely old parlor, —papa quite recovered, —looking out

on the rose-garden. To crown our happiness, the dear bishop was with us, bright and chatty, and more beautiful than pen of mine can describe.

Harry is going to Peru, where he hopes to make a fortune; but as he is by no means a poor man, and as his wife who is to be is by no means a poor woman, *I* contemplate keeping him company.

Mary Green is no longer with us. She is in New York, in one of the finest institutions of learning in the country, preparing herself for a teacher, so she thinks; but there is a queer look in Philip's face whenever he speaks of it, and I feel quite sure that some day the sweet girl will be one of us.

Papa, who has renewed his age, and is rapidly gaining strength, will go with Harry and me. It has always been his desire to travel; and, now that his home is to be in a measure broken up, he sees his opportunity. Meantime aunt Florence, *née* Flossy, is back in her beautiful home with all her treasures, with husband and child restored to health, and a load lifted from her heart which was becoming too heavy to bear. Little Mabel is looked upon now as the real angel of the household: her weak little fingers broke the chain of habit which encircled uncle Jack. Cousin Will has gone back to college. He wrote

me a letter a few days ago, in which "Hildegard" occurs seventeen times on three short pages. Aunt Catherine has thawed somewhat towards me, and sent invitations for a grand parade which is to be inaugurated in uncle Orlo's honor.

Will the procession be any thing like that old dream of mine, I wonder? God forbid!

HANDBOOK OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS;

WITH AN APPENDIX

SHOWING THE CORRECT USES OF PREPOSITIONS.

By LOOMIS J. CAMPBELL.

160 pages. Neat cloth binding. Price 50 cents. Mailed on receipt of the money.

This compact little volume contains about 40,000 synonymous words printed in clear, distinct type.

It is a work which will substantially aid speakers, writers, teachers, and students, — in fact, all who would gain a more copious vocabulary, and increase their power of expression.

It includes the really important matter of the more bulky volumes which are commonly sold for two dollars or more.

A great choice of words is here placed at the service of the writer and the speaker.

The Appendix, containing "Prepositions Compared and Discriminated," and "A List showing what Prepositions to use after Certain Words," is a trustworthy guide in a great number of cases of doubtful usage. A writer's knowledge of English idiom and his style are best shown by his use of these little hinges of the language.

From the Boston Journal, April 8, 1881.

"It is prepared on the *multum in parvo* principle, and it would not be easy to find a book of its size which contains more information of a useful sort. Clearly printed and well arranged, it is adapted to help any one who writes much, to enrich his vocabulary, vary his expressions, and secure accuracy in conveying his thought. The appendix, explaining and illustrating the correct use of different prepositions, is a particularly valuable feature."

From the Journal of Education, Boston, April, 1881.

"For writers and teachers this is one of the most useful and convenient Handbooks of Synonyms we have ever seen."

PRONOUNCING HANDBOOK

OF WORDS OFTEN MISPRONOUNCED, AND OF WORDS AS TO WHICH A CHOICE OF PRONUNCIATION IS ALLOWED.

By LOOMIS J. CAMPBELL AND RICHARD SOULE.

Price 60 cents. Cheap edition, 35 cents. Mailed on receipt of the money.

Designed to report the CURRENT USAGE OF THE BEST SPEAKERS, after a careful comparison of those bulky standards

WEBSTER AND WORCESTER,

and due consultation with the works of the best English lexicographers and orthoëpists. Also, to record SUCH WORDS AS MAY BE PRONOUNCED IN EITHER OF TWO WAYS without offence to good taste.

IT IS CONCISE, EXPLICIT, AND WASTES NO WORDS. We venture the prediction that NINETY-NINE PERSONS OUT OF EVERY HUNDRED who should look the book through would be greatly surprised to find how many words they are mispronouncing every day.

It is adapted for use as a text-book for schools, and has already found its way into a large number.

This book is a standard authority upon the subject of pronunciation, and an invaluable aid to teachers.

From hundreds of testimonials as to accuracy, usefulness, and handiness, we have room but for the following as specimens:—

From WM. A. WHEELER, Editor of Webster's Series of Dictionaries:

"This Handbook really meets a public want which has never been adequately met before."

Prof. W. D. WHITNEY, Yale College:

"I should think it would attract general attention, and fill the needs of many."

"The editors have performed their work with judgment and good taste, and it will be found a very desirable assistant in an essential accomplishment."

— *The Christian Intelligencer.*

*** Sold by all booksellers, and sent by mail, postpaid, on receipt of price.*

LEE AND SHEPARD, Publishers, 47 Franklin Street, Boston.

PUNCTUATION
AND
OTHER TYPOGRAPHICAL MATTERS,
FOR THE USE OF
PRINTERS, AUTHORS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOLARS.

By MARSHALL T. BIGELOW,
CORRECTOR AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE.

Small 4to. Cloth. 50 cents.

"The author has given, in practical shape, information not only useful to typos, proof-readers, editors, and authors, but to business men who write their own circulars, advertisements, etc. He shows the importance of punctuation to every man, and how little it is regarded. The contents convey to the reader the main features of this very useful handbook: 'A Corrected Proof-sheet;' 'Explanation of Proof Marks;' 'The Comma, Semicolon, Colon, Period, Interrogation and Exclamation Points, Dash, Parenthesis, Brackets, Apostrophe, Possessive Case, Paragraphs, Quotations, Capitals, Italics, Citations, Abbreviations, Hyphen, Compound Words, Syllabication, Rules of Orthography, List of Words Spelled, Accents, Divisions, etc., in the classical and modern languages. Remarks on Composition, Technical Terms, Sizes of Type, Dimensions of Books and Paper.'

"Thus concisely is the work handled, that one hundred pages suffice to give information upon the *summun bonum* of our printed language and how it should be done. This is supposed to be in the mind of a printer or writer, but it would be more to the purpose to have a copy of 'Bigelow' lying on the desk or case for ready reference at a moment's notice."—*Pittsburgh Telegraph*.

"Mr. Bigelow's training and long experience qualify him to speak with authority on the subject of which he treats. He is, however, far from dogmatic, and wisely recognizes the latitude which must ever be allowed the punctuator, not only in consideration of individual temperaments and styles, but also because of the interchangeableness of the points themselves,—*e.g.*, the comma, the dash, and the parenthesis, in marking parenthetical clauses. We have found ourselves in almost entire agreement with his rules. . . . Mr. Bigelow indulges in some wholesome censure of the dictionaries for their shortcomings in regard to compound words and syllabication,—shortcomings which he repairs or shows how to repair. Under Orthography he gives a number of useful lists, such as that of all verbs spelt with *ise* in this country, the plurals of nouns in *o*, and words variously spelt, with an indication of his own preference. In short, one can have only praise for this little manual, which in respect of typographical accuracy is worthy of its theme and of the University Press."—*The Nation*.

*** Sold by all booksellers and newsdealers, and sent by mail, postpaid, on receipt of price.*

LEE AND SHEPARD, Publishers, 47 Franklin Street, Boston.

UNDERWOOD'S HANDBOOKS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BRITISH AUTHORS.

Intended for High Schools, Academies, and Colleges, as a Companion and Guide for Private Students, and for General Reading. By FRANCIS H. UNDERWOOD, A.M. Crown 8vo. Cloth, \$2.50; half calf, \$4.50; half morocco, \$4.50; full morocco, \$6.00; full calf, \$6.00.

"I take great pleasure in expressing my hearty approval of it, both as respects the plan and the execution. It seems to me to be admirably adapted to meet a felt want in the department of education to which it belongs,—a department of the highest importance, but one very much neglected in the seminaries and even in the higher literary institutions of our country."—Rev. JOHN WILSON, A.M., *President of Wesleyan Female College, Wilmington, Del.*

"I am so well pleased with it, that I have just put it into the hands of a class of thirty. I have examined with care every book of this class, and am satisfied that Prof. Underwood's surpasses all similar books in the beauty, appositeness, and value of its selections."—Prof. A. B. STARK, *Principal of Corona Academy, Lebanon, Tenn.*

AMERICAN AUTHORS.

Intended for the use of High Schools, Academies, and Colleges, as well as a Companion and Guide for Private Students and for General Readers. By FRANCIS H. UNDERWOOD, A.M. Crown 8vo. Cloth, \$2.50; half calf, \$4.50; half morocco, \$4.50; full morocco, \$6.00.

"The present volume, containing nearly six hundred and fifty pages, opens with an historical introduction, which is followed by an alphabetical list of American writers not included in the collection. Then come carefully selected extracts from over a hundred and fifty American authors, with short biographical and critical notices prefixed to most of them.

"It is the best manual of the kind with which we have acquaintance; indeed, we do not know of any other which occupies exactly the same field. The examination of its well-filled pages will bring to many a new revelation of the real richness and variety of our young and vigorous literature."—*Boston Daily Journal, Jan. 17, 1873.*

"I consider 'Underwood's American Authors' the best book of the kind. . . . I use it constantly in my classes."—AUSTIN GEORGE, *Professor of English Literature, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Mich.*

WHO WROTE IT?

An Index to the Authorship of the more noted works in Ancient and Modern Literature. By WILLIAM A. and CHARLES G. WHEELER. Price \$1.50.

This volume is not a universal index to literature. It lays no claim to being exhaustive in any department. Its design is simply to furnish a handy-book for ascertaining or verifying the authorship of famous poems, plays, essays, novels, romances, philosophical and literary treatises, and the like, so far as they bear a specific and distinctive title. The senior editor, now deceased, was the author of "Noted Names of Fiction," and one of the Editors of Webster's Dictionaries. His work has been carefully revised and completed. This book is a valuable assistant to the student and the scholar.

OUTLINES FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH CLASSICS.

A Practical Guide for Students of English Literature. By ALBERT F. BLAISDELL, A.M., M.D. 300 pp. 12mo. \$1.50.

*** Sold by all booksellers, and sent by mail, postpaid, on receipt of price.*

LEE AND SHEPARD, Publishers, 47 Franklin Street, Boston.

OVER THE OCEAN; OR, SIGHTS AND SCENES IN FOREIGN LANDS.

By CURTIS GUILD, editor of the *Boston Commercial Bulletin*. Crown 8vo. Cloth. \$2.50.

"This is certainly a collection of some of the most perfect pen-pictures of sights and scenes in foreign lands we have ever seen." — *Albion*.

ABROAD AGAIN; OR, FRESH FORAYS IN FOREIGN FIELDS.

Uniform with "Over the Ocean," by the same author. Crown 8vo. Cloth. \$2.50.

AN AMERICAN GIRL ABROAD.

By Miss ADELINE TRAFTON, author of "His Inheritance," "Katherine Earle," etc. 16mo. Illustrated. \$1.50.

"The American Girl' is a bright, good, merry-hearted girl, off for a good time; and her readers are of the opinion that the journey was a decided success." — *Liberal Christian*.

BEATEN PATHS; OR, A WOMAN'S VACATION.

By ELLA W. THOMPSON. 16mo. Cloth. \$1.00.

"The author seems to have hit on just the most charming things to see, and talks of them in a charming manner." — *Tribune*.

ENGLAND FROM A BACK-WINDOW.

By JAMES M. BAILEY (the Danbury News Man), author of "Life in Danbury," "They All Do It," etc. Fourth edition now ready. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.50.

"The sketches are not mere humorous exaggerations, but contain a great deal of very sensible observation and graphic description." — *Baltimore Gazette*.

MIDNIGHT MARCHES THROUGH PERSIA.

By HENRY BALLANTINE, A.M. With an Introduction by President SEELYE of Amherst College. 12mo. Cloth. Fully illustrated. \$2.50.

GETTING TO PARIS.

A Book of Practice in French Conversation. By FRANCIS S. WILLIAMS, A.M. 12mo. - Cloth. \$1.50.

VOYAGE À PARIS.

La partie française d'un livre d'exercices de conversation française. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.00.

CAMPS IN THE CARIBBEES.

The Adventures and Discoveries of a Naturalist in the Lesser Antilles. By FREDERICK A. OBER. Many Illustrations. Cloth. \$2.50.

THREE YEARS IN ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO.

By SAMUEL WOODWORTH COZZENS. Illustrated by more than 100 Engravings. Crown 8vo. Cloth. \$2.50.

A THOUSAND-MILE WALK ACROSS SOUTH AMERICA, OVER THE PAMPAS AND THE ANDES.

By NATHANIEL H. BISHOP. 12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. \$1.50.

VOYAGE OF THE PAPER CANOE.

A Geographical Journey of 2,500 miles, from Quebec to the Gulf of Mexico, during the year 1874-5. By NATHANIEL H. BISHOP, author of "A Thousand-Mile Walk across South America." Embellished with spirited illustrations and ten maps of the coast. Crown 8vo. Cloth. \$2.50.

FOUR MONTHS IN A SNEAK-BOX.

A Boat Voyage of 2,600 miles, down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and along the Gulf of Mexico. By NATHANIEL H. BISHOP. Crown 8vo. With numerous Maps and Illustrations. \$2.50.

*** Sold by all booksellers, and sent by mail, postpaid, on receipt of price, by

LEE AND SHEPARD, Publishers, Boston.

Boston Public Library
Central Library, Copley Square

Division of
Reference and Research Services

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library.

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.

Boston Public Library



3 9999 05415 0162

